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SOCIALIST CHALLENGE

THERE is no real bite in the Opposition's attacks against the King's Speech. The nationalisation Bills proposed by the Government, unlike the postponed public ownership of steel, do not strike at the heart of capitalism. The Compensation and Betterment Bill, essential as it is for planning, is a substitute inherited from the Coalition for nationalising the land. The only criticism to be made of socialising electricity is to ask: Why not gas as well? As to the railways, Mr. Churchill was in favour of public ownership in 1918, and the Government is merely applying the principle to other forms of transport. There are to be other important Bills, dealing with Company Law and the organisation of agriculture and non-socialised industry; and we are glad to see that local authorities are to be given the power to establish Civic Restaurants. In fact this programme is not vulnerable, because it carries out Labour's electoral pledges and because the Government's record in the domestic field is highly creditable. Many of its difficulties in food, housing and other matters are due to world causes outside its control. Some of them arise from the American Loan, which was, in our view, based on a mistaken policy. But the Tories who want an all-in alliance with the United States are the last people who can logically attack the Government for failing to uphold our economic independence.

As for India, it needs Mr. Churchill's peculiar genius to see an analogy between the Government's resolute and patient efforts to remove an alien domination over a sub-continent, and the breakdown of a hypothetical League of Nation's peaceful rule over a United States of Europe. Mr. Eden may raise the vast administrative problem of Germany, but about that all parties are equally disturbed from their different points of view. The less Mr. Churchill says about the matter the better. It was he who personally prevented the sane effort to build a democratic group of Germans during the war, and today the "seventy malignant Huns" of whom he used to tell us on the wireless, have become "70 to 80 million men and women of an ancient, capable and terribly efficient race" living in "a ruined and famished condition" who "must manage their own affairs" and who are not to be blamed too much because they were the passive instruments of a ruthless dictatorship.

Three amendments have been tabled from the Labour side. One urges the claims of the workers to have a larger share in industrial management. A second deplores the continuance of compulsory military service. Many Labour supporters who are not out-and-out pacifists have a deep detestation of conscription. Their strength lies not in logic, since conscription appears to be the fairest and most efficient way of raising an army, and they do not propose the complete abolition of armies. But their arguments are strengthened today by the implications of keeping up vast armaments after a victorious war and by the knowledge that if we are to maintain our standard of living and carry out any satisfactory reconstruction programme, we cannot afford the Service establishment of more than a million which is apparently contemplated. The eighteen months' conscription proposed with effect from 1949 is, in itself, too long: the "ceiling," which Parliament should definitely fix, should be a maximum of twelve months. Moreover, apart from the long-range project, equal concern will be felt at the slowing up of demobilisation, against which there is already protest from troops with long service in Egypt and other parts of the world.

A more important amendment is that tabled by loyal, "moderate" back-benchers who had never before shown any tendency to attack their leadership. Their amendment has the merits of stating the real cause of back-bench criticism of Mr. Bevin's foreign policy. It comes to this. The world is apparently dividing into two great Blocs, to neither of which a Socialist Britain can belong. The Government seems content that we should become a satellite of the United States, lined up—with already integrated Intelligence systems and Combined Staffs at work in Washington—for an increasingly probable atomic war with the Soviet Union. This is contrary to every pledge on foreign affairs given by the Labour Executive and by Labour Members to their constituents last July. The amendment therefore demanded that British foreign policy shall be "reviewed and recast" on lines which represent, not a surrender to any foreign Power, but an independent British Socialist policy.

While Mr. Attlee regards those who put forward this amendment as rebels, they declare that they are standing loyally for the declared policy of the party; and they have decided to disregard the Prime Minister's appeals that they should withdraw. As a result, Mr. Attlee is confronted with an amendment in the names not of Communists, nor even of the group which follows Mr. Zilliacus. The original signatories to this amendment include such loyal stalwarts as Joe Reeves (a member of the National Executive), Jennie Lee, and Captain Mark Hewitson of the Municipal Workers; and among the backers are four Parliamentary Private Secretaries as well as a notable group of Left-Centre Labour M.P.s. This is a direct challenge, whether the Speaker calls the amendment or not. Throughout the last year the Tories have cheered Mr. Bevin, while the Labour benches have maintained an uneasy silence. Such a false situation cannot remain indefinitely; and the strong, indeed passionate, feeling revealed at the Trades Union Congress has now found expression. Now that this criticism is crystallised and vocal, Mr. Attlee cannot ignore it. It reflects a real disquiet among the Labour electorate throughout the country.

World Food Crisis

For the moment, the official ration scale in the British Zone of Germany is being maintained at 1,500 calories daily, but it seems doubtful whether this ration can in fact be honoured over the next few weeks unless wheat cargoes in transit across the Atlantic are diverted to Hamburg. The deficit of cereals in sight by the end of the year is formidable; and it is difficult to see how it can be met unless the United States makes good its still unfulfilled promise to equate rations in the British and American Zones on their fusion. The outcome of the talks now going on in Washington about the feeding of the Western Zones will be awaited with the gravest anxiety, the more so since there are reports that the Americans are likely to insist on the application to Western Germany of a system of free enterprise as a condition precedent to food contributions from the United States to the British Zone. The German problem, however, is only one facet of a world problem.

Sir John Orr has sent another warning to the United Nations Assembly, reminding the members (if the deteriorating German situation has not already done so) that world food supplies are very precarious indeed. There is at least a gap of 8,000,000 tons of cereals between the harvest results and the peoples' needs. The only way that gap can be narrowed and disaster averted is by observing the targets of consumption and carrying out the measures of conservation agreed at the Famine Conference in May, and there are nations which are failing in that duty. How, for instance, can the United States conserve or allocate without any form of control or government buying? And its *volte face* on the Orr proposals for a World Food Board is a fair indication that "Freedom from Want," like so many more of Roosevelt's high purposes, is not written very deep into American policy. Sir John Orr, who was here this week on his way to the Unrra countries, the rehabilitation problems of which he will inherit from La Guardia, still hopes that the Preparatory Commission which he left sitting in Washington will produce a World Food Board within the next three months.

We should like to share his confidence. Unhappily, Mr. Clayton, U.S. Under-Secretary of State and main sponsor of the International Trade Organisation, has shown himself bitterly opposed to the Orr concept of an "ever-normal granary"; and the acting Secretary of State, Mr. Acheson, announced on Tuesday that the United States would not support even the 400,000,000 dollar emergency food fund demanded by La Guardia as a means to carry necessitous European countries through 1947. The American view, he said, was that, though loans might be given to Greece, Austria and Italy, other countries would have to approach the supplying countries direct. In La Guardia's words, the U.S.A. means to play politics with human lives.

The Big Four and Uno

The proceedings of the Council of Foreign Ministers so far resemble the activities of four dogs faced with dishes whose contents are too hot to swallow: they circle sedulously from treaty to treaty, adjourning where they cannot agree. Are the Rumanian oil companies, which did pretty well during the German occupation, to be compensated—as Mr. Bevin wants—for damage by Allied bombing? Is Bulgaria to be allowed to fortify her frontier against Greece, as Mr. Molotov advocates? How large should Bulgarian reparations be to Greece and Yugoslavia, and in what proportion should they be divided? On all these questions deadlock between East and West has yet to be resolved. The most hopeful news is that, on the one hand, the United States has decided unilaterally to release at long last from Austria the Danubian shipping belonging to the riparian States, and, on the other hand, Mr. Molotov has at least agreed to take the French proposals defining the status of a Free Territory of Trieste as a basis of discussion. If this means a start in reciprocal concessions, we may still hope that the Balkan treaties will in the end be settled by a process of compromise after hard bargaining. Marshal Tito's offer to accept Gorizia in exchange for Trieste, provided the latter city is given real autonomy, confirms our view that the U.S.S.R. is not prepared to back Yugoslav claims to exercise sovereignty over the Adriatic port. With the Big Four thus occupied in New York, sessions of the U.N. Assembly have been of relatively minor interest, but the preliminary bombardment launched by Mr. Novikov in the Trusteeship Committee against Britain's interpretation of her trustee obligations in Palestine, Transjordan and mandated territories in Africa, suggests that when the Committee come to deal with American claims to exercise sole control over "strategic" areas in the Pacific, battle will be engaged in earnest.

The Scales in France

The French electorate has returned a new Chamber of Deputies, but not for some weeks will France know what the composition will be of the first Government of the Fourth Republic. First there will have to be the election of the Upper House, and then the choice by the two Houses meeting together of the President of the Republic, who will nominate the Premier, subject to his endorsement by the Chamber. Emerging from last Sunday's elections as the largest single Party, the Communists have declared their readiness to assume their "governmental responsibilities." Presumably the new President will invite M. Thorez to form a Cabinet, but, even if the Socialists are prepared to enter a coalition under Communist leadership, a Popular Front government, with the M.R.P. and the extreme Right in opposition, would command a bare majority in the Chamber only if the Radical *Rassemblement des Gauches* adhered. If the Radical-Socialists, on the other hand, entered the anti-Marxist camp, despite their differences with the M.R.P. on the issue of clericalism, there would equally be a bare majority for a Right-Centre coalition—faced though it would be with the task of endeavouring to govern France against the opposition of the entire working class. A third possibility is a Centre government composed of the M.R.P., the Socialists and the *Rassemblement des Gauches;* but such a Government would be under heavy fire from both Left and Right, and, after their heavy setback at the polls, the Socialists would probably think twice before entering a Government from which the Communists were excluded. France's need is obvious; she requires a Government which has sufficiently solid support in the Chamber to be able to tackle resolutely the many problems of economic reconstruction with which she is faced. A tripartite coalition on present lines would indeed provide the Administration with an overwhelming majority, but it seems extremely doubtful whether the Communists and the M.R.P. will again share, even *à trois*, a matrimonial bed. Indeed, the shift of the voting in the present election—gains by the Communists and the P.R.L., and losses by the biggest "moderate" parties—suggests that the political structure in France is being polarised gradually into Left *versus* Right. In that situation the Socialists, albeit now reduced to a relatively minor party of middle-class progressives, share with the Radical Socialists the power to make and unmake future Governments.

American Trade Moves

Mr. Clayton, acting for the State Department, announced last week-end that the United States, without waiting for the World Trade Conference, is proposing to open direct trade negotiations with a number of countries with the aim of reaching specific agreements for the mutual lowering of tariff barriers on what he called a *quid pro quo* basis. His announcement was accompanied by a message from President Truman relating it to the American Trade Proposals of last year. The President still has power, under the temporary authority granted to his predecessor, to make tariff reductions on a reciprocal basis without the need for Congress endorsement; but this power is due to expire in a couple of years, and seems unlikely to be renewed by the Republican Congress now in power. In effect, the State Department is trying to use the little time that remains to it for pushing Mr. Cordell Hull's policy before the Republicans regain control of the executive as well as of the legislature. This means that Great Britain will be asked to remove imperial preferences and other trade discriminations in return for a lowering of the American high tariff, despite the absence of any assurance that the lower duties will be allowed to remain in force beyond the next two years. If, in addition, the *quid pro quo* basis means that the reductions are to be equal on both sides, all the imperial preferences will disappear without bringing the American tariff down to a level that will make much difference to American imports. Other countries besides Great Britain will have strong reasons for scrutinising pretty closely Mr. Clayton's invitation to them to throw down their barriers despite the uncertainties of future American policy. They will hardly be reassured by the fact that his announcement was deferred until after the American election; for this deferment obviously reflected an anxiety to prevent the Republicans from making tariff policy an election issue.

"Switching" British Trade

From the British side comes, as if by way of answer to Mr. Clayton, the announcement of an intention to switch both imports and exports in order to improve the prospects of a satisfactory balance of payments. Apparently, the British Government's notion is that it can at the same time increase exports to dollar countries and divert import trade from dollar to sterling countries, so as to make the American Loan last longer and to make Great Britain less dependent for the future on dollar supplies. Such a programme runs, of course, directly counter to the American dislike of "discrimination," and amounts to a direct, and fully justifiable, assertion on our part that discrimination is essential to our very means of living. But can we, in practice, divert exports from sterling to dollar countries without being very bad friends to the countries with which we have the closest relations, or without seriously prejudicing our long-run prospects in the very markets on which our future trading position most depends? Under the onerous terms on which the American Loan was granted, we are obliged to release what we pay for imports from all sources for free conversion into any currency. If at the same time we deliberately cut down our own exports to the sterling countries from which we buy, we shall only force them to turn the sterling they receive from us into dollars, in order to get goods from the United States. The policy of buying as little as we can from dollar sources (except Canada, which stands in a special relation to us) is eminently right; but the policy of not doing our best to pay our sterling suppliers in British goods simply does not make sense. If we can push exports in the dollar area without cutting off supplies from our sterling countries, well and good; but it would be the merest folly to weaken our export links to the countries on which we chiefly rely, and propose to rely even more, for our essential imports.

The British Balance of Payments

At the back of all this is the unpleasant realisation that the sharp rise of prices in America, *plus* our unexpectedly large burdens in Germany, portend a very rapid exhaustion of the American Loan, and also will probably make our obligation to release current sterling from control a good deal more onerous than we thought it would be when we unwisely accepted it. It is gradually being realised that, though our current trade deficit is smaller than we feared it would be, our prospective dollar deficit is a great deal bigger, and that the export drive has carried us no appreciable distance towards the necessary balancing of our international accounts by the time the Loan is all spent. It may be that, up to quite recently, our optimists hoped that, when this time arrived, we should only need to ask the Americans for more; but if such hopes were ever entertained, they can hardly be entertained now, in face of evident American intentions to drive hard political bargains in return for every dollar of economic aid—to say nothing of the likelihood of outright refusal to lend. The moral is that we can afford less than ever to give up the right to bilateral bargaining, or to meet Mr. Clayton's overtures in the absence of long-term guarantees which he is plainly not able to give. It is also clear that we must keep a tight hand on our own buying policy, and can by no means afford to relax any control that enables us to pick our sources of supply in the closest possible relation to our ability to pay. Mr. Attlee, in his Guildhall speech, was manifestly uneasy about our balance of payments problem and went out of his way to reiterate his warning that it would not be solved for many years yet. He is all too right. Not merely will it not be solved; it will within a very few years threaten formidably the Government's entire achievement, and the entire British standard of living, unless we keep our hands free and use our freedom effectively.

Developing the Cameroons

The explanation which Mr. Skinnard and Mr. Rees-Williams elicited in Parliament last week from the Government as to the reasons why four ex-German refrigerated banana ships had not been put at the disposal of the Jamaica Banana Producers' Association left unanswered the question why the Colonial Office is content to place reliance on an American monopoly in the development of a British trusteeship territory in West Africa. It appears that a Development Corporation on co-operative lines is to revive the Cameroons, and in particular the banana plantations which formerly belonged to the *Afrikanische Gesellschaft* of Hamburg. One would have thought, therefore, that the Corporation should have become the owners of the German ships. Instead, they have been sold to Messrs. Elder & Fyffe, a subsidiary of the United Fruit Company of America, which has apparently been given a concession to rehabilitate the Cameroon plantations in return for an exclusive monopoly of the Cameroon banana trade. It seems odd that a Socialist Colonial Secretary should have endorsed this arrangement, even though it was presumably inherited from the Coalition—the more so since the United Fruit Company showed such hostility to co-operative banana enterprise in Jamaica that the Producers' Association there had to abandon its co-operative basis in 1936 and become a pure marketing company. The precedent thus set augurs ill for the Cameroons.

Quicker Divorces

Some day presumably, England, like other countries, will decide that divorce should not be the revenge of one partner upon another, but a permit to dissolve a marriage which both parties agree has failed. In the meantime it will be generally agreed that the existing high costs and delays in divorce procedure are socially undesirable. Apart from the notorious congestion of divorce cases on all Assize circuits, there were 40,000 suits awaiting trial at one time this year in which Service men or their wives were petitioning. In these circumstances we warmly welcome the recommendations which the Denning Committee has made in its second Interim Report—that there should be a drastic simplification of the costly rigmarole of affidavits and other legal red tape required by the procedure of the High Court, and that the 57 County Court Judges should be appointed Divorce Commissioners with the status and pay, in that capacity, of a High Court Judge. It is estimated that the Commissioners can dispose of nearly 30,000 undefended cases in a year, and thus relieve King's Bench Judges of undefended divorce work at Assizes. It is open to question whether, as the Committee considers, the status of marriage is really upheld by insisting that its termination must not be sanctioned by a Judge who has not had conferred on him *ad hoc* the prestige of High Court standing; but at any rate the practical steps proposed for obviating the present intolerable delays are on the right lines.

BRITAIN, AMERICA AND FRANCE

The sharp fall in share values which followed the Republican victory last week symbolised the mood of the American people. They want to enjoy the pleasures of a boom; but simultaneously the individual reinsures instinctively against the slump which he knows will follow. The question so often asked during the war by English visitors—"Has the lesson of the last slump been learnt?"—has now been answered flatly in the negative. As a result of the election, a weak and incompetent Administration, with no positive policy of its own, will capitulate to the demand for the end of controls and a return to unfettered private enterprise. But this time—as distinct from the Coolidge-Hoover era—the spectre of catastrophe will be present throughout the revels. A few politicians, as stupid as Mr. Bricker or Mr. Taft, may believe unreservedly in the capitalist system, but most of those who voted Republican did so not out of a belief in capitalism but a disbelief in any alternative to it, and an instinctive and correct assessment of the bankruptcy of Democratic leadership. If there is to be no New Deal, then why not vote for the party which believes that the right to get rich at the expense of the community is the American answer to Communism?

Much has been made of the deadlock between a Democratic Administration and a Republican Congress. But this constitutional weakness is not the main danger which faces America, as it did after the first World War. Then President Wilson's League policy was frustrated by a hostile legislature. There was a deadlock because there was a conflict of policies. No such conflict exists to-day either in domestic or in foreign affairs. No difference of principle separates Mr. Truman from the Republican leaders. The New Deal had been killed by the Democrats long before the election, which was in fact little more than a struggle for the spoils of office. The Republican majorities in the House of Representatives and in the Senate will merely ensure that Mr. Truman carries out, with rather more irresponsibility, the policy in which he and his own party leaders believe—to make hay while the sun shines and to hope that it will shine for a few years.

The results of this policy can be predicted with some certainty. With the end of O.P.A., prices will oscillate violently as consumers, by refusing to purchase, seek to protest against the new price levels and trade unions renew their demands for higher wages. If, as is almost certain, the rising cost of living leads to a new wave of strikes, they will be met with anti-labour laws which will win support from some workers disgusted by the irresponsibility of the Trade Union bosses. But the unsatisfied demand for goods is so large that a major slump—as distinguished from a 1921-pattern recession—may be postponed for several years. In foreign affairs, Mr. Byrnes's active anti-Russian policy will be still further developed under the leadership of the small group of conscious imperialists who dominate the Army and the Navy Departments. But this political expansionism will be offset by an economic isolationism. America will refuse to accept the responsibilities which fall on the shoulders of the greatest creditor nation. There will be no reduction of tariffs sufficient to enable the debtors to pay their debts, and no large-scale foreign investment to build up purchasing power in "politically undeserving" backward countries. Economically America will turn in on herself and frantically seek to absorb her vast productive capacity in the home market. Then, when production exceeds the demands of that market, there will come the sudden attempt to export unemployment in order to fend off the slump.

Most responsible Americans see this prospect clearly enough. But they can do nothing to prevent it. Since the death of Roosevelt, the Left has slowly disintegrated, and was finally disavowed by the Administration—witness the dismissal of Wallace—in a frantic effort to avoid defeat at the polls. For a short time, Roosevelt, Wallace and Hillman formed a triumvirate powerful enough to make the Democrats, despite themselves, and particularly despite the city bosses and the Deep South, a liberal party. The deaths of Roosevelt and Hillman and the dismissal of Wallace ended this era, and the trade unions have consequently reverted to political irresponsibility. America, the last surviving stronghold of capitalism, enters another boom with no political organisation of any kind to represent working-class interests or to present to the voter a constructive alternative to economic anarchy. When the crash comes, it is far more likely to move violently to the Right than to the Left.

Thus the field is left clear for the fulfilment by the Chiefs of Staff of their full ambitions. Under the cover of resistance to the inroads of Communism, the Army and the Navy can reckon on popular support for any expansionist course which they wish to pursue. Already they have shown their hand in their blunt assertion that, Uno or no Uno, the Americans will keep and fortify the Japanese bases acquired during the war. Yet another naval demonstration in the Mediterranean, announced last week, shows that they are still working up for a showdown over the Dardanelles. If, in the course of repelling the attacks of "Red Fascism," America picks up a few economic dependencies such as China, so much the better. But the basic motive will be, not economic imperialism, but the creation in the Far East of a Pax Americana, and in Europe and the Near East of an Anglo-American Bloc to ensure the safety of the New World against the "Red Menace." With the news, released in America, but not published here, that all arms and munitions are to be standardised and interchangeable between Britain and America, Mr. Churchill can feel satisfied that every word of his Fulton Speech has been adopted as American strategy and ratified by the Republican victory at the polls.

The French, like the American, election has gone according to prediction. Here, too, the voters have only given political recognition to a well-established tendency, and confirmed the deepening of the rift between Left and Right. The Socialists, as was expected, have lost heavily, and the Communists and the parties of the extreme Right have gained. But in France, in contrast with America, there is a real and calamitous deadlock. General de Gaulle would gladly see France a junior member of an anti-Bolshevik Bloc dominated by America and Britain, and many of his supporters would be willing to undertake the violent suppression of the Left in order to achieve this. The Communists, who have now rallied the overwhelming majority of the working-class in their support, will be encouraged by their success to continue uncompromising opposition to the Bevin line. As a result of these contradictions, France will continue to have no foreign policy at all. It is often suggested that the Socialists have lost votes owing to their Communist connections. This, of course, is the precise opposite of the truth. Had they overtly joined the M.R.P. in an anti-Communist alliance, they would have forfeited their last remaining working-class votes. Their defeat is partly due to Mr. Bevin's policy since they are inevitably associated with Britain in the minds of Frenchmen. If we wish to revive the French Socialist Party and to achieve Anglo-French understanding, this can only be done by propounding a policy which is so explicitly opposed to anti-Bolshevism, and so obviously free from American dictation, that Socialists and Communists can work together in France as they have decided to do in Italy.

In brief, the elections in America and France have made even more clear the choice which faces this country. To continue the Bevin-Byrnes line will render any accord with the Left in Western Europe out of the question, and it will hasten the disintegration of those forces and parties which, like the British Labour movement, seek a middle way between Catholic reaction and Russian Communism.

America has turned her back on a world economic order and declared her belief in economic anarchy abroad as well as at home. The Republican leaders now in power voted against the British Loan. If we go cap in hand to them and ask for favours in return for our military contribution to the war against Communism, we shall come back empty-handed. American business has decided to go its own way. It will do business with a Socialist Britain which goes its own way with equal resolution and takes immediate steps to make itself immune from the effects of the slump which is bound to come.

Finally, it should not be imagined that the Russians have failed to observe the signs of the times. It seems clear that Mr. Molotov has at long last been cured of his fatal delusion that America would stand idly by while the British Empire was disintegrated by Communist propaganda. By now he realises that this policy has had exactly the opposite effect to that intended and has actually driven America, despite every sentiment, into a defence of British Imperialism.

Thus the stage is set for a British initiative. After the Republican victory we have nothing to gain and everything to lose by economic subordination to America. The last remaining justification for British acceptance of an Anglo-American Bloc has been removed. We can revert to the position of independence which we should always have held, and we can seek, together with France, Italy and the rest of Western Europe, to work out a Socialist solution to our common problem, which threatens neither America nor Russia, unites the Left instead of dividing it, and so permits the survival and development of those Socialist parties which should be our chief natural allies.

Will the Government take the opportunity? The signs are not auspicious. At the Mansion House the Prime Minister seemed far more concerned with preparations for war than with the establishment of peace, with the defence of Empire than with its transformation into a Socialist Commonwealth. His policy is still, with the glowing exception of India, a Churchillian and not a Socialist policy. It will remain so until the Parliamentary Party and the Labour movement throughout the country clearly indicate their demand for a change.

A RETURN TO SANITY

THE well-advertised activities of the Jewish terrorists must not divert attention from the real improvement in Anglo-Jewish relations which has taken place during the past three weeks. The Stern Gang and the *Irgun Zwei Leumi* have been able to increase their prestige and strength prodigiously as the result of British policy since last May. Evidence of their increased popular support is the fact that the Revisionists, the Party which supports them, received 16 per cent. of the votes in the recent Zionist elections in Palestine. Both groups are also undoubtedly far larger to-day than they were last June when the Cabinet decided to crush them with the full force of the British Army. Indeed, their terrorist activities are now more widely extended than they were before the military operation began. The Revisionists have also increased their hold on Jewish communities outside Palestine, for instance, in South Africa. It is a curious fact that, at the moment when every policeman in London is mobilised against Jewish terrorism, a Revisionist paper is still being sold on the bookstalls, and funds are being openly collected throughout England—not to mention the U.S.A.—to support the campaign of violence.

The reason for the new wave of terrorism is the imminent "danger" of a sensible settlement. The Stern Gang and the *Irgun* are both fighting for a Jewish State in the whole of Palestine and Transjordan, the programme to which the Revisionist Party still adheres. They are far happier when the British Government is playing into their hands, as it was last summer. What they most fear is a sane British policy which would restore to the responsible Jewish leaders, and in particular to the Jewish Agency, the prestige and authority which had been undermined by British intransigence. It is no accident, therefore, that the new campaign of violence inside and outside Palestine coincides with the release of the Jewish leaders from Latrun, the removal of General Barker, and the transference to other posts of the two Palestinian officials who personally advocated the rejection of the Anglo-American Report and the use of strong-armed methods against the Agency. Equally unpalatable to these extremists is the emergence of Arthur Creech-Jones as a Colonial Secretary who understands the problem and is determined to achieve a settlement if humanly possible. They realise that, if he succeeds, the popular support for terrorism may soon disappear. They must seek to destroy the spirit of compromise, both on the Jewish and on the British side, while it is still possible to do so.

The parallel with Ireland after the last war is uncanny. There, too, a British Government, by a savage policy of repression, created a terrorist movement pledged to oppose partition, whose activities included bomb throwing in Downing Street. There, too, conciliation began so late that, even after the settlement, the Irish Government had to fight its own extremists, and in the second Civil War Michael Collins was shot by men who a few months before had served under his leadership. This is the future which faces the responsible Jewish leaders even if a reasonable settlement is soon achieved. It is a terrible prospect, but they face it with coolness and courage.

The chances of a speedy settlement are better today than at any time since the publication of the Anglo-American Report last May. An American official, closely concerned with Palestine, remarked recently that when the American Administration puts its foot into it, it always puts the other foot in as well to make matters worse. When the British Government makes a terrible mistake, it is a past master at the art of getting out of it without too much loss of face. This apparently is the process which is now going on. It explains the remarkable fact that David Ben Gurion, who a few weeks ago was a dangerous terrorist, had lunch last week with Lord Inverchapel, and that Mr. Shertok, whose complicity with the *Irgun* was supposed to have been proved by the White Paper last July, is now released without a stain on his character.

The fact is that at long last the Cabinet has discovered that the Jews of the National Home cannot be bludgeoned by brute force into compliance with British strategic requirements, and that the Jewish Agency leaders, confirmed in office by an overwhelming Palestinian vote a fortnight ago, are the only people capable either of restoring law and order in Palestine or of negotiating a settlement.

Meanwhile, in America, an equally welcome return to sanity is observable—after the election. The feud between a pro-Arab State Department concerned with Middle-Eastern oil, and a pro-Jewish White House, concerned with New York votes, seems to have been finally settled. The President's firm and sensible letter to Ibn Saud was accompanied by a secret telegram to all American officials in the Middle East, instructing them not to explain it away in conversation with the Arabs as a piece of domestic politics. On the other hand, the State Department has been placated by the decision of the President to surrender the conduct of the negotiations to Mr. Byrnes and his permanent officials. Ibn Saud's mild reply has exploded the myth that he would proclaim a Holy War against the Jews if the White Paper were repudiated. It seems probable that the Arab League, almost as much as the British and American Governments, is by now heartily sick of the Palestine crisis and ready to accept with only verbal protests an Anglo-American settlement which is firmly imposed. Mr. Byrnes has made it clear that in exchange for the recognition of an independent Jewish Commonwealth in part of Palestine, America would be willing to provide considerable dollar funds for economic development of direct assistance to the Arabs.

Everything now depends on the skill and prudence of the negotiators. It would be unfair to the Jews and unhelpful to British prestige to demand that the Agency should put forward the compromise solution which is desired by all. Any solution will have to be imposed; and Jewish and Arab moderates who support it will do so knowing full well that they have to fight their own extremists. What is needed immediately is willing Jewish co-operation in the conference; then, when it is clear that no agreed solution is possible, the imposition by Britain, with the backing of America, of a plan which ends the Mandate, destroys the Police State, and gives independence to Jew and Arab alike.

R. H. S. CROSSMAN

A LONDON DIARY

A WELL-KNOWN farmer to whom I talked the other day, remarked that he would willingly pay £10 a week in wages to his men if they would only do the work. This was a far more intelligent comment than that of other farmers, who complain bitterly at having to pay high wages. The difficulty is not the wage, but that no-one is very keen on getting on with the job. The problem of "incentives in industry," both on the land and in the factories, under capitalism and under Socialism, has still been inadequately explored. Obviously Socialists have been too glib in saying that once an industry was nationalised, men would work with a new spirit. The claim was justified only to a limited extent. In the coal mines, for instance, exhortations to the men to work harder under State ownership are only partially successful, for the simple reason that the mining population, which has grown old in the job, is tired anyway and that the younger men no longer relish going into the pits. Why should they? Boys have become coalminers because they have belonged to a mining community with a tradition. They have gone down into the pits with their fathers, and have been proud of becoming fully skilled miners at the earliest possible age. But once the tradition is broken and coalmining becomes a voluntary choice of occupation, the number who prefer it to other kinds of work is obviously very small indeed. This is a world problem eventually to be solved by more intelligent use of machinery or by atomic energy taking the place of coal. For the rest, P.A.Y.E. has something to do with it: men are not so keen on getting more money as they used to be and there is not much to spend it on anyway.

* * *

The Soviet Union claims to have found the answer; a new incentive is created by a proletarian revolution. But the Soviet Union has had to evolve whole new sets of incentives such as special pay and privileges to Stakhanovites and "Socialist competition" for the highest production between factories—not to mention that some of the dirtiest work in the U.S.S.R. is called "regeneration" and carried out by prisoners in penal camps. Trade Unionism in a social democracy is not attuned to either of these methods. It is to be noticed that if Socialists have to do some new thinking about the incentives to industry, their difficulties bring no comfort to capitalists, who have nothing new or hopeful to say on the subject. Their incentive was the "whip of hunger" which, in the sense of making men work for a number of hours, could be effective again under a Fascist or free enterprise State. But it could not produce good hard work from men who know that we live in a world of potential plenty and who have forever lost the psychological attitude of the nineteenth century.

* * *

I have been rightly rebuked by those in Authority for saying a fortnight ago that only three

Trade Unions have been recognised in Germany, and that obstacles are constantly put in their way. The remark was out of date. Briefly, the story is that, when I was in Germany some six months ago, I found that German Trade Unionists who were trying to pass through the two preliminary phases towards full recognition, were meeting with obstacles, some of which were fantastic. I met British officials who were supposed to be building Trade Unions, and who quite obviously intended to do nothing of the sort. I was told that the Authorities were frightened of allowing any German organisations to grow up on more than the most restricted basis, and that Trade Unions (in which any genuinely democratic tradition in Germany is embodied) suffered most of all from these fears. At that period there was a lot of talk about the Unions developing Left-wing tendencies—a trend which seems now to have greatly diminished. I followed these developments during the summer, and always heard the same story of snail-like progress. In the summer, the first Unions were allowed to reach the final, that is the operative, stage, in which officials are elected and the Union is allowed to function. It was not until a conference at Bielefeld on October 4th that a real change took place. The obstacles were removed and I am now told that 49 have reached the "third phase." During August, German Wage Advisory Councils were set up at regional level in all regions, and today I am told Works Councils deal with matters that arise between workers and employers. A friend who watched these changes in early October speaks of them with real enthusiasm—and he could have published a book about the infuriating red tape and obstacles that had until then prevented progress. Somebody, he said, has at last given a straight forward directive. So I was at least a fortnight out of date in my remark. I feel a little like the magistrate who asked the prisoner why he had insisted on beating his wife, and was indignantly told that the prisoner had given up this practice on last Tuesday week.

* * *

I was interested to learn that a plan on really bold and imaginative lines has been worked out by Sir Charles Reilly and the late Dr. Otto Neurath, Viennese town-planner, for Bilston, one of the ill-planned slum towns thrown up by the industrial revolution in the Black Country. The Bilston Venture is a frontal attack on the problem of industrial slum clearance. In the first stage waste land on the fringe of the town is to be developed for re-housing; and the plan is based on adjacent greens surrounded by houses, thus forming small communities, which are each a part of larger communities consisting of several such greens. These are to be served by a community centre with facilities for feeding, education, and leisure activities, with a twenty-four hour nursery service. As in similar Swedish plans, meals can either be had at the restaurant in the centre, or ordered by telephone for delivery in thermos containers. Heating and hot water will be on the district system and suction garbage collection will be provided. Psychologically, the plan, models of which are being shown on exhibitions in Bilston this month, is designed to give people a choice between privacy and community activity.

* * *

Another week, when my mind is more reconciled to the fact that I can no longer run down to Hampshire and spend a week-end talking to Harry Roberts, I may write some more about him. It would be easier to write a book than an article about his remarkable life and character. He was, if you like, a typical rebel, Socialist in his politics just because he was an individualist. But he had none of the selfishness that we associate with people who insist on living their own type of unconventional life, and none of the boring qualities of the crank. If he seemed to some people cranky, it was just because he was devastatingly sane. By the force of his own affection for other people he created round him a community of unusual happiness. In Stepney he built what was I believe the largest medical practice in the country, and the queues of poor people who waited at his surgery door regarded him with an affection that came near to idolatry. He began his career as a doctor in Cornwall, came up to London, and became friend of almost all the great reformers and Fabians of the later nineteenth century. But he was not and could not be a Fabian. Intellectually he could agree with planning, but he did not like plans, and his interests and achievements were too varied and too individual for him to be a successful politician. He was, incidentally, a first-class authority on gardening; a farmer and a specialist in half a dozen other fields. He was an admirable writer, producing not only a large number of books on medicine, crime, gardens, morals and other subjects, but also contributing regular articles to an astonishing variety of papers, including all the weekly reviews, who so valued his writing that they withdrew their usual objection to his name appearing in the columns of their rivals. Readers of this journal will recall his articles over a long period of years. They sprang from an immense practical experience which was combined with expert technical knowledge. And he could write nothing that was not stamped with a humorous and sensible originality.

CRITIC

DISARMAMENT RACE

No statesmen desire disarmament more
Than Molotov, Bevin and Byrnes;
The armament race they sincerely deplore,
Since peace is not kept by preparing for war,
But they cannot consent to take turns.

Disarmament measures can only succeed
If each meets the others half way,
But each one is chary of giving the lead—
On disarming, in principle, all are agreed,
But procedure is causing delay.

Byrnes, Bevin and Molotov yearn to disarm,
And their passion for peace they assert;
Great Britain's re-arming bodes nobody harm,
But it goes with America's state of alarm
And the Soviet's state of alert.

The Big Three, while pleading disarmament's case,
Scent danger in going too fast,
And none is ambitious to take the first place
Because in the breakneck disarmament race
All Three would prefer to be last.

SAGITTARIUS

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to Richard Jones.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

An Upwell (Norfolk) grocer unable to sell a new line of sweetened drinks, put them under the counter and recommended them to each customer individually. He sold out in a few hours.—*Evening News.*

I knew a man who used to wear his club cricket cap when he listened in to wireless reports of Test matches in Australia.—*Observer.*

We shall not get over our troubles until we transfer part of the queues from the bakers, grocers and fish shops to the labour exchange.—From speech at dinner of London Morris dealers reported in *Motor Trader.*

A lady in the audience reminded the meeting that the Bible told them the Kingdom of Heaven would come like a thief in the night. Suppose the Kingdom came on a Sunday night. What a terrible thing it would be for those people in the cinema.—*Dartmouth Western Guardian.*

A friend of mine, for instance, who is a peer, objects—and very rightly—to his non-inclusion in all the more formal announcements.

He says, after all, that he has paid his licence and would like to hear the announcer say: "*My lords,* ladies and gentlemen...." It's a fair complaint.—*Daily Express.*

I only buy the *News Chronicle,* said Mr. Hodgkinson last night. . . . Besides being a paper with a moral uplift, I get all the football news I want from it, and if anything has helped me at all to win this money it is that paper.—*News Chronicle.*

GYNOPOLIS

FOR a hundred years the economy of Dundee has been carried on the backs of the women. It has been a one-industry town, and the jute-industry until recent years employed two or more women to every man. It was the rule and not the exception that women continued working after they were married. They went to work at six o'clock in the morning. When they were pregnant, they worked until the pains were on them, and they were back at the looms or the spindles as soon as they could creep. They had no choice; they had to find half the family income. That was responsible for the high infantile and maternal mortality and for the "peelie-wallies" and the "runts," those stunted, ill-shapen men and women who mar a Dundee crowd. Children were farmed out to professional baby-minders. Homes were poor and neglected. The slums of Dundee were among the worst in the world. As recently as 1935, the average income of the jute-worker who slaved for such an existence was £83 a year.

And the jute trade was always rocking. Dundee was a chronic "Special Area." Slump followed slump with the frequency of epileptic fits. The Depression was followed in the 'thirties by the intensified competition of Calcutta. The Indian jute trade, originally financed by the Jute Barons of Dundee to get the advantage of coolie wages, had grown to proportions which captured the world market in cheap jute (and the only virtue in jute is that it is cheap). To-day Indian mills (with Indian capital) are mass-producing ten times as much jute-cloth as Dundee. Indeed, Dundee now imports Indian jute-cloth to manufacture certain special lines of sacking. All the ordinary lines, all the gunny bags, are made now in Calcutta.

To answer Indian competition, Dundee increased its mechanisation and concentrated on special purpose jute—such as the backing for linoleum. To cut capital costs the shift system was introduced before the war. Instead of women, youths between 18 and 21 were used on the night shift. There was a decline of 38 per cent. in the number of women employed in 1939 compared with 1931. They did not retire, they were discarded. Women of Dundee have been hard driven and hard done by.

To-day, there are only 8,500 women in the jute industry; the number is half what it was before the war and a third of what it was in 1931. What makes the authorities purse their lips and raise their eyebrows in dismay is that, despite good wages and the return of women from the Services and from directed labour elsewhere, the total female labour force in Dundee has slumped from 26,500 in 1939 to 23,500 today. Women are "going out of circulation" by choice. But the Dundee figure is still more than twice the normal ratio of women to men in an industrial community.

Part of the withdrawal is due to women pensioners retiring. Another important factor in the decline is leave-with-pay. Women whose husbands have been demobbed have "taken his leave" and stayed at home, but, as one woman who had done that and had not gone back when her husband found a job said to me, "Biding at hame is a nice habit tae get." Another, with four children, said that family allowances had made "juist that difference." Another young woman said, with a conviction her mother could not have afforded, "When the wean comes Ah'm quittin'." And another, explaining why she continued in work although her husband was demobbed, said bitterly "If ye saw ma hoose, ye'd ken foo Ah wanted to keep oot o't."

A jute employer, now looking for women labour, said that women had been "spoiled" in wartime industry with "Workers Playtime" and "that sort of rubbish." Another assured me that, if only there were more consumer goods to buy, the women would "come tumbling back." But a public official, whose job it is to know, said: "Don't you believe it. Women who have got out of jute won't go back to it unless their families are going hungry again; and Dundee is balancing its new industries to see that that won't happen."

The jute employers realise that. One of them, confronting in my company the head of one of the new light industries, demanded: "Apart from stealing our women, what else are you going to do?"

So the Dundee New Industries Plan, which is impressive in its scope and so successful in achievement that the Board of Trade is directing no new firms there meantime, rightly (in the civic sense) treats the jute trade as a personnel pool which will provide gainful employment until the new factories are ready to recruit heavily. Well it might, because the jute industry has a precarious future. At the moment it is threatened with a shortage of raw jute because of the operation of the Indian export controls. Moreover, it is quite conceivable that India, to capture what fraction Dundee still holds of the jute trade, will exercise its monopoly and ban the export of raw jute. As one cynical Dundonian said, "India would be biting the hand that slapped it." Now Dundee is looking for alternative fibres (jute grows effectively only in India) in the tropics, particularly West Africa. But while it is looking, India can capture the market for coarse cloth. Of course, the jute manufacturers might break with tradition and go over to the new synthetics.

New industries already sited in Dundee include: cash registers and accounting machinery, to employ 1,500; a clock and watch firm to employ 800; a clock and fancy goods firm to employ another 800; a hat firm (1,500); an optical firm (200); an engineering firm (400); an important plastics firm (600); a rubber factory (450); coal-cutting machinery (40); local firms are breaking fresh ground, opening new premises and going to employ about 2,000 new workers.

Some of this development is housed in an industrial estate, well planned in manageable units which can be leased singly or in multiples, and which, in the event of new developments, can be readily adapted to other purposes. The industries are being carefully sited round the periphery.

Assuming that no drastic fate overtakes the jute industry in the meantime, Dundee's labour "budget" for 1950 estimates that there will be 68,500 workers—39,500 men and 29,000 women—and that the traditional industries and trades of the city will need about 53,000 workers. The new industrial developments are being planned to take up the balance, and have already bespoken over 9,000 of it, in the ratio of 4 women to 5 men.

But one can find in Dundee a pretty fair illustration of other general problems. There are only *two* bricklayers working on the building of the large industrial estate, which has not been scheduled as "Essential Work." Some of the big factories being built have been so scheduled and are making reasonable progress, but the plastics firm is held up for want of plant which may take two years to come forward.

Then there is the appalling housing problem. The new civic conscience of Dundee is wrestling with a heritage of the past century which created some of the worst slums in the world. The neglected people of Dundee need all the houses that can be built and as quickly as they can be built, but—and here is the quandary, which is repeated everywhere—to create new industries you need to import key men. One key man can mean work for hundreds, and if that key man can't get a house he will not come. That is happening in Dundee. Houses desperately needed now by Dundonians may have to be requisitioned for the fresh arrivals if the new industries are to get going at all.

But Dundee is still a City of Women (those purposeful women who used their first votes to throw out Churchill and put in Neddy Scrymgeour because as a Prohibitionist he was going to send their men home to them with wage-packets intact). Give their men a decent pay packet which "a gill on the road home" will not hurt; give the women a decent home and a chance to bring up a family, and will there be those 29,000 women workers for Dundee's Five-Year Plan? It is very doubtful. And if there is, another factor will come in—the birthrate and its long-term effect on the new industries.

The number of juveniles entering Dundee industry this year is a third less than ten years ago "because," as a public official said, "factory women made a deliberate choice of labour."

RITCHIE CALDER

FLAG DAYS

A FLAG-DAY isn't the sporting event that it used to be. For one thing, the huntresses no longer move about in droves; so many girls are now in full-time employment that the few who can still give up a day to this national pastime solicit singly or (at the most) prowl in predatory pairs. For another, the flag-days themselves are so infrequent and their causes so meritorious that the public subscribe more willingly, or at least with less reluctance.

The infrequency and the merit have a direct connection, and both reflect an official policy. Londoners who remember the first two years of the 1914 War will recall that never a day went by without a street collection; but they may not remember that frequently, on one and the same day, street collections were made in the same districts and at the same time for numerous quite separate (and sometimes rival) organisations. You could get money for anything that purported to be connected with the war, from mouth-organs for wounded Tommies to knitted comforts for Gurkhas. The High Court had held that "begging," to be unlawful, must be "begging habitually for one's own benefit," and could not include (for example) the conduct of a trade union member soliciting contributions in the street for union funds during a strike; the law about begging was "not directed against persons collecting for a charitable object." And until 1916 there was no other means by which street collections could be brought under satisfactory control. In that year Parliament passed an Act authorising "police authorities" (i.e., the county or borough council—in London it was the Home Secretary) to make Regulations requiring anyone organising a flag-day to obtain a permit, to employ only duly authorised and *unpaid* collectors, and to submit audited accounts after the collection.

But why "flag-days"? The O.E.D. adopts the generally-accepted derivation: "a day on which money is raised for a cause by the sale of small flags or other tokens as evidence of having given." But it is possible that "the sale of small flags or other tokens" was originally a law-dodging subterfuge. Before 1916 the inner districts of London (i.e., those within six miles of Charing Cross) were governed, as regards street collections, by an Act of 1903, which necessitated permits from Scotland Yard and the rendering of audited accounts on occasions when people "collected money in any street for any charitable or other purpose." This did not apply to the sale of articles. It was therefore a simple expedient to sell relatively worthless articles at whatever prices the ambushed citizenry would give; and if only you could get supplies of flags, paper flowers, buttons, etc. (or make them yourself), and you gave some minute percentage of what you collected to the "charitable or other purpose" you purported to be helping, you were safe against the law of false pretences, fraud, unauthorised street collecting, and begging, and you were on a good thing. So the Act of 1916 roped in "the sale of any article," and it became an offence to sell flags or other tokens in the street in aid of charity without a permit.

Does it follow that flag-days will die out? Even under the system of control that began in 1916, they averaged 300 a year in London alone until 1934; and leaving out Sundays, this is one every day. Every big hospital had its own flag-day, all the children's charities and social welfare societies and ex-Servicemen's organisations had one each, societies formed to suppress things that others existed to preserve—day after day, month after month they went on, buttonholing the scurrying public. And at last, in 1935, the "Advisory Committee on Street Collections" which meets at Scotland Yard to examine and recommend or reject applications for permits drew up a scheme of enforced "co-ordination." Since then the London hospitals collectively have been allowed two flag-days a year instead of seventy, the children's charities two instead of seventeen, and so on. In 1937 there were only 29 flag-days, and that number has not been exceeded since. All the organising secretaries and appeals committees were alarmed and despondent at this arbitrary administration of the rules made under the 1916 Act; there would be a catastrophic fall in revenue, they said (and this was credible), and the public would resent being deprived of their right to support the hospitals by giving their shillings in the streets (but this was not). They were wrong. They got more money than ever.

The Advisory Committee have recently published their report for 1945—you may have noticed an extract in an obscure corner of *The Times*. There were only twenty-two collections, and they got over half-a-million pounds. The British Legion ("Poppy Day") got £108,235, the combined hospitals £84,853, and Alexandra Day (which mainly benefits the hospitals) £54,262. Out of the half-million that went to these and other charities, £48,017 went in expenses. This not unreasonable proportion of 9 per cent (more than half of which goes in purchasing the flags and other tokens) is a great improvement on the days when there were 300 flag-days a year. The proportion swallowed up in expenses then was as high as 16 per cent.

The discretion of a police authority in granting or refusing permits is absolute. This may or may not be a good thing: it can be a bad thing if, for example, lack of sympathy with the objects of a charity is allowed undue sway. (Consider the position of a county council whose members ride to hounds and are dealing with an application from the Anti-Blood-Sports League.) The discretion is absolute in the sense that no provision is made for appeal to a higher authority against the refusal of a permit, and that the grounds on which a permit can be refused are not prescribed (as they are, most rigidly, under an Act of 1939 for the control of house-to-house collections). When, therefore, the hospitals are brought under State control, under the recent National Health Act, police authorities may be in some doubt whether they should continue to allow hospital flag-days. The refusal of a licence can always be challenged, of course, by putting down a question in Parliament—a fact of which the licensing authorities have often been made aware.

Whatever abuses might have gone on before they were controlled, flag-days are a genuine and well-administered means of revenue to many deserving causes. But, relatively few as they are now, nearly everyone thinks them a great nuisance; and if they are to be superseded by State beneficence they will be unwept. No weeping will be done, at all events, by those who find themselves free day after day to take their usual route to the station unembarrassed by the choice between mincing complaisance and tight-fisted misogyny.

C. H. ROLPH

TOO MUCH BOTHER

THE girl was pregnant and sharp-faced. "You don't," she said, "always want the bath in the kitchen."

"No," I said. "It makes difficulties."

She glanced at the young man in the raincoat, who had edged his way to the front of the crowd and was writing in a notebook. "It isn't convenient," she said.

"Especially when they want six guineas a week for it."

"Six guineas?" She looked startled. "Oh, they only wanted four and a half for this one." She elbowed through to the young man. She pointed to an advertisement in the window; he read it and shook his head; she tugged his arm, pointing to another advertisement. The crowd pressed round them, peering, stretching, fighting to read the scribbled cards. Some wrote diagonally on the backs of envelopes, their elbows tucked in, trying to make themselves as small as possible; others, like the young man, wrote neatly in a notebook, standing as square and patient as policemen, taking down all the details about central heating, lifts, length of lease, to careful tenants only, to single gentlemen only, would suit two ladies, would not suit ladies, no children, no dogs; six guineas, ten guineas, twelve guineas a week, price of contents £1,200 or near offer.

I had a notebook. At the beginning of the week I had written neatly, like a policewoman; everything I had written at the beginning of the week was struck out now, in ink—No Good, Let. I turned away down the Brompton Road, my notebook in my pocket. It was no good telephoning yet; all the advertisements said 'Phone before 10 or after 6. The only one that didn't was an unfurnished flatlet measuring 12ft. × 20ft. in Notting Hill, and two rooms that nobody had measured in Kensington for 7 guineas. The girl and her husband caught me up at the 'bus stop. "Did you find anything?" I asked.

"There's not much." They were on their guard. I wondered how they would have a baby in a flatlet measuring 12ft. × 20ft.

"Why don't you go to the Town Hall—get them to put you on their list?"

"We lived in Durham before the war. You had to be a ratepayer here before the war for them to put you on their list. Besides, prefabs!"

"They've got wonderful kitchens."

"We're going to have a baby. You can't live in a prefab. with children."

"I've got three children, and I'd live in a prefab, if I could find one big enough. They've got wonderful kitchens." I felt it was necessary to insist on the kitchens. In the morning I had seen a flat where the coal was kept in a box in the hall, the food in a wardrobe; the kitchen table was a piece of board laid across the bath and the furniture had come about 1850 from a bazaar in Calcutta. The rent was six guineas a week and the landlady talked ceaselessly about her nerves and Neville George Clevely Heath, on whom she could have written a thesis.

"A kitchen," the girl said, "isn't everything."

"Oh," I said sourly, "if you want everything. . . ."

I moved into South Kensington. Many of the houses were empty; no one had even tacked up dust sheets over the windows to deceive the squatters. Dry-rot, I told myself; they're all falling to pieces inside, that's what it must be. I found the hotel I was looking for; the swing door closed behind me with a whisper.

I walked as quietly as possible to the desk and asked for Mrs. M. She was sitting behind a palm, so that in spite of the porter's directions she was difficult to find. I walked in and out, round leather sofas and chairs, until at last I saw her, a mountain of a woman in a hat the size of a cottage loaf. "Ah yes," she said, "The young woman about the rooms. My daughter told me about you. Sit down."

I said ingratiatingly, "It's very kind of you."

"What do you want?"

"Well, I heard . . ."

"Yes, yes. What do you want?"

I explained the situation. It was urgent. My husband was being demobilised. We had nowhere to live. She stared at me while I was talking, without hostility but without a gleam of understanding; I felt I hadn't convinced her. Finally she said, "I have only just bought this house. I am going to charge six guineas a week for bed and breakfast. I suppose that's too much?"

"Yes."

She said, "Huh!", which might have been a laugh; "I'll let you have two rooms for twelve guineas."

"That's about three pounds a week more than we've got."

She peered, incredulously; she was hurt. "I don't want you to pay more than you can afford."

"Well," I repeated wearily, "we can't afford twelve guineas."

Obviously, it took her some time to think this out. I waited. At last she said, "I don't think it's quite what you're looking for, is it?"

Nobody else seemed to be talking; if they were, they made no sound. I muttered that her daughter seemed to think that the house wasn't ready, that she didn't want it left empty, that possibly she might let us have a couple of rooms until . . . She had an idea then. "I am going to keep my room here in the hotel, because of course it will pay me to let *all* the rooms in the house, won't it? Besides, I'm so used to it here. I only have two refugee boys and my companion to look after the house. Now if you would keep your eye on them, I could let you have two rooms at half price. What about that?" She was triumphant; all our difficulties solved. She insisted I went with her to see the house.

She walked slowly. Her "companion" had joined us; she was a young foreigner, earning her small salary by agreeing with pathetic eagerness that the day was hot but a taxi unnecessary. We came to the house, which was very ugly. We stepped inside, over rubble and planks. Mrs. M. held her skirt high; in 1910 she must have had a pretty ankle, and the gesture had become a habit. The foreman, half her size and with an acute squint, popped up from the basement; he cleared things away before her and, with a flourish, led her into the dining room. She stopped dead in the doorway. "The ceiling!" she cried, "The ceiling! It's blue!"

"But madam—you said blue ceilings!"

"Blue! I said greenish-blue! Didn't I say greenish-blue? You wrote it down, I saw you write it down! Greenish-blue!"

The foreman cringed. "Don't worry," he implored her. "Don't worry about anything. We can cover the walls and do the ceilings again. It's no trouble, no trouble at all. All the ceilings?"

"Are all the ceilings this terrible blue?" He admitted they were.

"Then all the ceilings. I said greenish-blue. It's very trying."

Workmen were busy plastering, painting, hammering; they stared at us critically as we passed. I wondered what it must feel like to be redecorating a house for someone like Mrs. M. Yesterday, in Knightsbridge, a butler in a green baize apron offered me a two-roomed service flat for £800 a year. Weary, soothed by the deep carpet and neo-Empire furniture, I said, "Look, no one can afford £800 a year." A grin spread over his face, untidying it. "Some can." I tried a tired joke: "Obviously the only way to get somewhere to live is to join the Communist Party." "You could do worse," he said, and wished me luck before he shut the door.

Mrs. M.'s new house could accommodate two large families. The Notting Hill flatlet, I calculated, would fit nicely under the drawing-room chandelier, between the window and the fireplace. The foreman said, "You can have dances in here."

Mrs. M. lowered herself, painfully, into the basement. We stayed upstairs, looking out into the garden which was large enough for six children to play running games.

"Why did she buy it?" I asked.

"She was walking back from Harrods one morning instead of taking a taxi, and she saw it, so she bought it in the afternoon."

There was no law against people like Mrs. M. buying houses; there couldn't be. "But why?" I insisted.

"She said she wanted something to do. But she isn't going to live here. I'm supposed to do the cooking, but I haven't seen the kitchen yet. I don't know how it's going to work out. All these stairs."

Mrs. M. was exhausted by the time she came up from the basement. "You're sure you can get the electric cookers?" she was asking. "Remember I want two. And the curtain rods. And the stoves. And *all* the ceilings must be repainted. You're sure you can do that?"

"I'll do it, madam," the foreman assured her. "You'd have had it ready by now if it wasn't for this Government. Every tin of paint I want I have to fill up a form." His conversation, like his eyes, squinted. "It's this Government. The sooner they're got rid of, the better."

Mrs. M. approved of him. He told one of the workmen to drive us back to her hotel. The dilapidated car was full of junk; the man was surly; Mrs. M. gave him a shilling. "Now what do you think?" she asked me graciously, on the pavement.

"I don't think it'll be ready in time."

"No. Perhaps you're right. Well, I hope you find something. I hear there is a great shortage of houses. Perhaps you would do better to buy. Goodbye, Mrs. . . . and I *do* hope you find something."

I walked back, stopping at a stationers on the way, filling up another page of my notebook from the advertisements in glass cases. Someone was offering a reward of £50 to anyone who would let them know of an unfurnished flat in any district. A woman was following me; she had no notebook, but scribbled telephone numbers on the edge of a newspaper. She had bare legs, old shoes, and mascara had blotted terrifying shadows under her eyes. "Looking for a flat?" I asked. She nodded. "It's pretty hopeless, isn't it?"

"It's all right if you can pay," she said. "We're being turned out next week; the owner's coming back from the country. My husband's only been home a fortnight. He hasn't got a job yet. You looking for a flat too?"

I said I was. "I'm sure I've seen hundreds of empty houses in the past week," she said. "Some of them being redecorated, some of them look as though they haven't been lived in for years. My husband says it's silly to get angry, people have got a right to buy houses if they've got the money, they've got a right to have them painted up. But when you can't even find a two-roomed flat that's fit to live in at a rent you can pay, you can't help feeling angry. I can't anyway. We've got a little girl. We evacuated her in 1943; she's never been home yet. My husband's only seen her twice." She twitched a smile. "Oh well, I suppose it'll all come right in the end. They're doing what they can, I'm sure. If I don't find anywhere, we'll have to start squatting, that's all."

We wished each other luck. I went to the nearest telephone booth and 'phoned to Hampstead Garden Suburb. I went to Hampstead Garden Suburb and saw a flat with many religious pictures on the wall, a green tiled bathroom, and a housekeeper. It was the usual rent, six guineas a week, and you had to take the housekeeper with it; she had a dog. You didn't pay her, but you kept her. She was a very pleasant woman, but she would have to eat; so would the dog. That put the rent up to eight guineas before one had started.

There was just time when I got back to look at a flat at World's End which had been severely broken up by the previous tenants; they had left in a hurry. The only method of heating was by coal fires; the water was heated by a coke boiler. I doubted whether either coal or coke would be available, but it was only five guineas a week, and I said I would think about it. Pieces of furniture had been torn away, possibly as firewood. Furniture, however, isn't everything. I found a telephone and rang up Mrs. M.'s daughter.

"I didn't fix anything with your mother."

"It's just as well, because she's just 'phoned me to say she's decided to sell the house."

"Sell it? But why?"

"She thinks it's too much bother after all. It came over her this evening, she said; she's lost interest. Apparently all the ceilings were the wrong colour . . ." PENELOPE DIMONT

The Arts and Entertainment

MUSIC

INATTENTION, as every honest listener will admit, is the perpetual bogy of the concert hall. It takes many forms. There is that sheer physical drowsiness which steals irresistibly upon us in the middle of something we may perhaps have been looking forward to for months: I have known its insidious approach even during a Toscanini *Fidelio* with Lotte Lehmann in the cast! At afternoon concerts the struggle is apt to be unequal: the most modest of luncheons constitutes a danger, and a glass of beer turns one into a helpless non-combatant.

On the road to total insensibility there are many half-way houses, among the most frequent being the day-dream, or the more practical speculation about neighbours and trains and to-morrow's plans. More pathetic, because more worthy, is the desperate attempt to follow the analytical programme; and was there not a man who used to be seen at concerts reading a book called *How to Listen to Music?* All these snares were deliciously burlesqued in a recent B.B.C. *How* by Joyce Grenfell; but whereas Miss Grenfell's victim knew the danger and tried hard (though unsuccessfully) to resist it, it is the peculiarity of a new method of inattention patented by Mrs. Lander that she would indignantly deny that it constitutes inattention at all, and has indeed no hesitation in recommending it for general use.

Who is Mrs. Lander? She is the author of an article (the first, it seems, of a series) in *The Gramophone* called "Music and Makebelieve." She begins by telling us how she came to like a modern piano concerto (unspecified) which she had previously disliked. The method was simple: she made up "an entire story" to go with it. The next step was to try it out on the neighbours "at one of our small fireside concerts; . . . as the concerto ran on, in low tones I told them my story." Success: previously hostile listeners were now "completely thrilled." So why shouldn't we all have a try? "As the music starts, have pencil and paper handy and write down the first thoughts that come into your head. From then onwards you can weave magic patterns of your own to almost any music." Why not make it into a community pastime? "Wouldn't it be interesting to ask some of your friends to listen to any piece of music, all at the same time, and each write his or her own story to it? I should imagine there would be a great many ideas . . ."

Several specimens then follow of Mrs. Lander's "ideas"—and, as we know, there are plenty more to come. The longest of the first batch refers (but the verb is inappropriate) to Tchaikovsky's *Fifth Symphony*. Of course this work, like most of Tchaikovsky's, has a rudimentary programme of its own (about Fate and Love and All That)—a programme which was quite fairly borrowed by Massine for *Les Présages*. But the composer, whatever he might have thought about the ballet, would surely have been astonished at the elaborate novelette "woven" to his music by Mrs. Lander: a banal and highly factual affair which reads like the scenario of a silent film, all about a shipwreck, a captain who goes down with his ship (end of first movement) but turns up safely after all (end of slow movement) to the natural delight of his wife and his little dog. This animal plays quite an important role; "whining or his master" in side 5, lying contentedly at his master's feet in side 7 (while the wife "flits around the cottage, humming quietly a tuneful little ditty"—*i.e.* the theme of the third movement), and jumping around "wagging his tail for pleasure" (startling reason!) in side 9. At the end, however, the poor little fellow is reduced to whining in the corner once more, when "the captain puts on his oilskins again, and, followed by the lads, makes his way to the harbour to help in the rescue of a second ship in distress."

It's a free country; and Mrs. Lander has a perfect right to entertain her friends in any legal manner that occurs to her. Indeed no blame properly attaches to her in the whole business; her attitude to the arts is far from uncommon, and her manuscript is doubtless typical of many other unsolicited contributions. But what is one to think of the editorial decision to accept it for publication? *The Gramophone* has an expert staff of record reviewers, and consequently enjoys a wide circulation among music-lovers; but those readers who are neither irritated nor amused by Mrs. Lander's effusion can only be led astray by it. When a serious and influential journal accords to such private fantasies all the dignity of thematic quotation, and promises us not one but several further instalments, it is time, I cannot help thinking, to enter a protest.

DESMOND SHAWE-TAYLOR

RADIO NOTES

THERE have been signs lately that the needs of inter-Programme planning are not always intelligently consulted. Addicts of the Third must of course expect sometimes to perform the acrobatic feat of sitting on two chairs at once; but I seem to feel that the habitués of the Light Programme should not be asked to take so much trouble over their pleasures. On November 8th, for instance, a peak listening hour (8 p.m.) was occupied by two symphony concerts, one in the Home Service and one in the Light Programme, while Act 1 of *Der Rosenkavalier* was discoursing in the Third; and later on the same evening the third act of Strauss's long and sumptuous opera was followed immediately by Part 3 of Schoenberg's *Gurrelieder*. Those who heard Parts 1 and 2 on the previous night will mostly have wished to hear the rest, but very few of them can have had the stomach for it at that moment. This kind of plethora is wasteful as well as bewildering. At the dinner table enough is seldom as good as a feast, but in broadcasting it certainly is.

Atomic Energy. The prospect of this programme raised high hopes, some only of which were—rather tardily—realised. Indeed, had I not been used to associate the name of Nesta Pain with much intelligent and objective radio, I think I should have switched off in the first ten minutes of this broadcast. In view of the grave and complex nature of the subject, one was prepared for an uncompromisingly plain approach. The stretches of bogy music which preceded and punctuated the first sequences of the feature were an insult to the intelligence and imagination of listeners to the Third. In programmes which aim primarily at an aesthetic effect, music may on occasion be in place; but where argument is to be maintained and difficult information conveyed, it can only distract and annoy. This was a clear instance of trying to cover too wide a listening field. Radio is a rifle, not a shot-gun: if you *spray* the audience, you may pepper a few people, but you will get nobody in the heart. However, better—much better—was to come: Mrs. Pain's construction of a future atom-bomb attack on London, and of its results, was horrifying in its sobriety and in the imaginative use of detail. I wish she would recast the whole programme so as to include more scientific material.

The Father. Strindberg was neither the first nor the last artist to make capital out of Persecution Mania. There is nothing wrong with this, if the vision is coherent and poetically intense enough to reach beyond the quirks of a special case. In a novel this is easier to achieve; in a play the necessary element of suspense is ruined if we are made to feel that the dice are too heavily loaded from the outset. Even on the stage *The Father* is less impressive than the same author's equally horrible *Miss Julia;* and as a figure of nightmare Laura is far less convincing, because more coarsely conceived, than Hedda Gabler, who harbours a similar obsession. *The Father* is powerful theatre, but not, I think, good literature; and any impression it may make hardly survives reflection. On the air the piece seemed oddly ineffective, and even Miss Dresdel's competent performance left me stone cold, perhaps because it was so eminently foreseeable.

The Visual Arts. There has been a good deal of sense and sensibility knocking about these rather dour programmes; but it should be clear by now that they can never be more than a very partial success until photographs of the pictures and objects discussed are published in the current *Radio Times*. If this is impossible in present circumstances, it would be some help if we were warned in advance what pictures, etc., were to be discussed in detail, so that we could perhaps look them up. Mr. Robert Melville's dramatised effort to "explain" the more eccentric modern movements was intelligent and amusing; but it attempted too much (or too little?) and the acting suggested a Palais de Danse or a tennis club rather than a painter's studio.

Composer and Interpreter. An admirably interesting feature, which I hope will be continued and extended. But the various interpretations really should follow one another on a single occasion, for detailed comparison to be at all possible: at a distance of twenty-four hours or more one forgets too much. And it is a mistake to suppose that people dislike instant repetition of a single piece which has interested them; indeed, even the most practised musicians desiderate this.

Ruth Draper. I could name more than one of our best comedians who have based the essentials of their style on Miss Draper's extraordinary art. I still prefer the inimitable fun of her short caricatures; but, listening to her portrait of an old New England woman, I paid homage to the detailed observation, and the humanity, which elsewhere makes Miss Draper's humour so light-hearted and so riotous.

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

THEATRE

"There are Crimes and Crimes," and "The Family Reunion"

To read a Life of Strindberg, after watching the production at the New Lindsey, was to experience the play all over again. *There are Crimes and Crimes* marks a recovery from the depths. Strindberg wrote it in 1899, immediately after the four years of madness and frustration during which alcoholism, actual insanity, and the descent to the Everlasting No seem inextricably mixed.

Most of Strindberg's transformations, his thoughts and acts in this period, seem to reappear in the play. The successful playwright who has earned the laurel crown of acceptance in the Paris theatre . . . the change to poverty . . . the belief in the value of suffering . . . the belief in absinthe . . . the belief in telepathic influence and the guilty desire to make it serve his own ends by inducing illness in one of his children . . . the illness of another child as punishment for his sin in wishing . . . the mixture of the mundane with the unearthly . . . the sense of persecution, by neighbours who make too much noise or by nameless beings forever silent and invisible . . . the mixture of madness and sanity.

Somehow the play falls short of the great soul drama which the author intends. One feels at the last, less that the hero has found salvation than that he has merely got well. To re-word Blake: What was once imagined is now only proved. The playwrights and novelists of Strindberg's time were discovering, through the power of the imagination, new shapes of human character, all the mystery of which has been destroyed because it has been too remorselessly taped by the modern psychopathology of the unconscious. Our wretched familiarity with phrases like Persecution Mania and Guilt Complex destroys the drama of the situations in which they are manifest.

Less than two cables away from the spectacle of this sea of guilt and seething self pity, to the Nor'west by west, at the Mercury Theatre, Mr. Eliot's play shows us a drama more truly of the soul, with the Eumenides, instead of mania, as the ministers of the persecuting conscience. But Mr. Esme Percy, for all his knowledge of the stage, has not Mr. Martin Browne's power of turning to advantage the limitations of the small auditorium. Our leading baroque actor has embellished his production at the Lindsey with too much detail. The cues are too slow; the pauses too heavy. On the other hand Mr. Percy's casting is admirably judicious, not only in his choice of Miss Trigo, Miss Rotha, Mr. Whiley and Mr. Eustrel but in the smaller parts as well. And the New Lindsey Club are to be thanked for giving us a play which, although it has been performed on the Continent more often than any other of Strindberg's later plays, has never before been seen in England.

STEPHEN POTTER

THE GALLERIES

The retrospective exhibition at the Lefèvre Gallery of works by Frances Hodgkins deserves the most careful consideration. Unluckily I have already said all I have to say about this artist. Years ago I was thought eccentric for suggesting that her achievement was the most impressive in contemporary English painting—an opinion which this show confirms. (I say " achievement," because several of our painters seem equally gifted, and some of these when they have painted as long as she will, one hopes, have achieved even more.) The exhibition includes a few early works, dated 1902, in which no one could have perceived any sign of genius; and it has three gouaches painted this year that are among the boldest and most covetable works Miss Hodgkins has ever produced. Inventiveness in colour is her most conspicuous gift, but a drawing of two girls reveals her command of form apart from colour. Her largest canvases usually seem to me to lack coherence, but it may be that like some of the best modern composers, she is making melodies too long and elaborate for me to follow. The satisfaction given by her pictures, which are not abstract, seldom depends upon representation. Yet it cannot be classed as merely decorative. She projects the world of her individual imagination, making the same effect upon us as great poetry or music. If one could explain exactly why these pictures are so impressive, a principal problem in aesthetics would be solved. But one enjoys pictures not by theorising about them but by looking at them. And delight not unmixed with awe arises from the contemplation of such works as *Cut Melons*, *Three Sisters*, *Arum Lilies*, *The Elevator*, *Root Crop*, *The Bridge*, *Dorset Farm* and *The Croft*.

The Redfern Gallery has a lively show of work by Graham Sutherland, Anna Mayerson, Janko Adler, and two newcomers, Otto Bachmann and Raoul Ubach. Bachmann is a Swiss, very skilful, who would make an apt illustrator for refined and gallant French novels, Crébillon *fils* or Nerciat. Ubach is a Frenchman, with a charming sensibility to texture and colour, no giant, but a welcome arrival. The Sutherland sketches are beautifully luminous. At the St. George's Gallery Mr. Walter Goetz shows a series of watercolours. His more audacious and Piperian works seem to me not happy in colour, but he draws adroitly and will, one hopes, continue to use for our benefit his uncommonly sharp eye for architectural eccentricities.

Agnew's have an exhibition of the war time acquisitions. Apart from a large Rubens they have already shown there are three outstanding works; the Poussin from the Cook Collection, splendidly Venetian in colour (but the Madonna's head is painted more tightly than the rest of the picture, and jumps out of the composition); a noble portrait by Fabritius; and the Tintoretto of the Dead Christ: but this is a most interesting and powerful picture. One head might be by Greco, which is less surprising than one hand which might be by Gris. The Matsys, the Cuyp, and the Lippo Lippi also are fine.

ROGER MARVELL

THE MOVIES

"School for Secrets," at the Odeon

"The Verdict," at Warner's

Along certain lines today—one welcomes the fact with a start of recognition—English films can be relied on to canter home. *School for Secrets* I should have backed as a dead cert. Subject—radar, our most exciting discovery of the war; Peter Ustinov directing, Ralph Richardson acting. In the hands of the post-documentary school such a film could hardly fail to triumph. Nor does it. So far as there was anything dark about this horse it was the precise degree of cunning and self-development Mr. Ustinov would bring to the job.

He is the second English writer of talent to apply himself to film-making. (Script writing, alas, isn't film-making.) Mr. Coward was the first: his success, I must admit, surprised me not a little. Mr. Ustinov's may be taken, so far, for granted. He is very young, intelligent, practical. Already on the stage he has demonstrated his knack for bringing people alive with a gesture, a few words; demonstrated also, unless my memory of *The Banbury Nose* and *The House of Regrets* goes awry, a certain impatience with stage forms. One doesn't Chehovise, or put one's action into reverse, without reason. Besides he has taken to botanising over wide fields of English social life, for which the West End stage is about as well-adapted as the Royal Academy today would be for a young Hogarth. Botanising? No, the figure isn't nearly dashing enough: garbed in pink, to the crack of whips and tootle of horn, he runs down his elusive quarry, the " county," the drawing-rooms and mess-rooms, the explorer with a tic, the fussy matriarchs, the unchanging public-school boy, the portfolio-carrying young, the old-age pensioner, the solver of the *Telegraph* cross-word. War sliced open for him, a Russian by birth, our carefully coated traditions. (The home-bred Englishman today rarely achieves satire.) And he has both written dialogue and played parts in films, including that admirable transition piece, *The Way Ahead*.

On form, then, *School for Secrets* was bound to excite. Personal lift for Mr. Ustinov: there is no one, now, from whom one hopes more for English films. As to the film itself, except for some lags in technique, it is all it should be and more. The top secret has its own thrills, which are amply and well dramatised (for example, in the Battle of Britain and the night-fighter sequences), while the " Boffins," or back-room scientists who make these all-important discoveries, fascinate as much as radar itself. They have to spend the war together, wives and all, a nest of Boffins, in the cranky intimacy of Inkerman Road. Years pass; they rub along and invent; Cologne shows up on the ground-glass of a thousand planes; one Boffin gets killed in a crash, another has to share in a Commando raid; we get fond of their little ways, even the prig's, who has one moment of bitter self-revelation. Good performances by Ralph Richardson, whose subtle buffoonery never overflows, by Raymond Huntley, John Lawrie, Marjorie Rhodes and others. Mr. Ustinov has, besides the gift of vivid and quick characterisation, an irrepressible bobbing humour and a dramatic instinct that can deal with most situations off-hand. How easily, for example, when three Boffins meet at the end in uniforms of the three Services, he passes off this glaring *entente cordiale* with some comic business, and in the one touch of tragedy succeeds in drawing tears! Such legerdemain (who else has it except Mr. Coward?) is a joy to encounter. He is, in fact, damned clever. Probably, to succeed as a film-dramatist today, one has to be.

The Verdict is a conventional but not ill-made detection thriller of the Nineties. London appears in its usual chiaroscuro of fog, rain and gaslight; the music-hall songstress lets her Cockney slip when she sings a song; Mr. Sydney Greenstreet is more monumental, Mr. Peter Lorre more lizard-like, than ever. On the whole this is good, solid, melodrama, with a firmer plot than the usual.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

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Correspondence

G.B.S. ON FOREIGN POLICY

Sir.—The speech of the Prime Minister at the Guildhall proves the alarming importance of the letter in your last issue from Mr. Zilliacus. It was at the Guildhall that Ramsay MacDonald began his descent from intransigent Socialism to sonorous bunk merchandise that finally made him negligible even while he was still Prime Minister. It is Mr. Atlee's great merit, and the explanation of his unexpected accession to the Premiership, that he can always state his case clearly and judiciously without covering himself up with the elocutionary graces of his predecessors. This time he has not only shown that the Labour Party has no answer to Mr. Zilliacus, but has quite definitely committed the Party to the old Foreign Office routine of Security first, Reparations second, sparring for the Balance of Power third, and Disarmament, after all the other States have disarmed, last. With, meanwhile, Preparation for the next war.

This ancient program has fastened itself on the Labour Party simply because Nature abhors a vacuum. The Socialists have no foreign policy, having been completely preoccupied with domestic reorganisation. This is true even of Russian diplomacy. Stalin knows better; but Molotov's Danubian policy seems to us an exact copy of Churchill's.

Mr. Zilliacus is not a man to be ignored. I knew him in Geneva during his long connection with the League of Nations. He is the only internationally-minded member of any note in the House of Commons. His queer name and extraordinarily composite nationality, backed by his supernational outlook and unique experience, to say nothing of his friendly and democratic private character, made him a marked figure in Geneva. He is a man who must be attended to and his question answered if another fiasco like that of Versailles and its sequel in 1939-45 is to be averted.

G. BERNARD SHAW

MR. ATTLEE AND RUSSIA

SIR,—Mr. Winterton's anecdotes of "disappearing" Russians would by now have overpopulated Siberia as assuredly as the splinters of the "true cross" would have built Peter the Great his wooden navy. Here are some facts, the omission of which I regretfully noted, when reading in your November 9th issue Mr. Winterton's latest version of the perilous adventures of two British ladies in Georgia.

I was the foreign correspondent in Moscow of a well-known London national newspaper when the ladies in question returned from their trip last summer. With the alertness that my newspaper naturally expects from its correspondents, I learnt at first hand the whole amazing saga of the capture and detention of the two charming young women of the British Press Department. It was a horrible story and one which should serve as a future warning to other unsuspecting British ladies who are foolhardy enough to visit the Red Mecca of Generalissimo Stalin's birthplace—at Gori. Why, I asked myself, was the British Navy so far from these inhospitable Black Sea shores?

The ladies, it appeared, had forgotten their identity papers—all of them, passports and permits—in their hotel at Batum. Their native lady companion had likewise left her identity papers at home. When approached by a Georgian militiaman (not NKVD as Mr. Winterton informs us) and on their failure to speak in the language of the country—since they knew no Georgian and very little Russian—he asked them to show their papers and establish their bona-fides. This they could not do. The explanations of their companion being deemed inadequate by the zealous policeman, all three of them were invited, albeit politely, to accompany their captor to the police station. There they were interrogated—the process being unduly long because of the language difficulty. The Intourist Hotel at Batum was telephoned and, after the identity of the ladies had been established, they were released with suitable apologies.

Mr. Winterton's letter, apart from anecdotes, raises a number of challenging questions. After three years' service in the Soviet Relations Division of the late M.o.I. and as Press and Radio Officer in the Press Department of the British Embassy in Moscow, I can affirm that there was a steady improvement in Anglo-Soviet relations up to May, 1944. It was in the post-Potsdam period—for lack of a better term—that relations began noticeably to deteriorate. Official cordiality stiffened; personal contacts dropped off, not as some would have us believe because of "order from above," although that must have played its part, but because of the profound disappointment and bewilderment occasioned by our foreign policy.

Mr. Winterton bemoans that it is "rare for a correspondent or diplomat to entertain privately a high industrial official or well-known Party member." If we want personal contacts, then we ought to have trade unionists, scientists, engineers among our diplomatic representatives—even a dignitary of the Labour-Party would not be amiss, if he could be spared. As far as I know, there is only one Embassy Secretary qualified to talk about the life of the majority of the British people. I believe that Mr. Winterton has done, and is doing, a severe disservice to Anglo-Soviet relations. I believe that he is probably doing a severe disservice to his own cause—if that cause be the enlightenment of our people regarding the Soviet Union. If some of us have preserved a silence about the shortcomings, the difficulties, the uneven progress of some aspects of Russian life, that silence was born in the ruins of Stalingrad, in the wastes of the Ukraine, in the knowledge of the hard post-war burdens our Soviet allies now bear. If we have anything to be ashamed of, it is rather that too few of us, in these days when it is unfashionable to speak well of the Russians, have found the energy and will to balance Mr. Winterton's assertions with the tremendous Soviet achievements, and to maintain that peace and sanity can only come to the world if our two countries find a solid basis for lasting friendship.

16 North End House,
Fitz James Avenue,
London, W.14.

DAVID TIRRELL

SCANDAL IN GERMANY

SIR,—My release leave having expired, I am for the first time in a position to comment on your editorial "Scandal in Germany."

Many British officers must, like myself, have felt an intolerable sense of shame and frustration at the corrupt incompetence of our administration of Germany, and will agree that you have by far understated the facts as they must be known to thousands of us. Unfortunately, this leads too often merely to a feud between the army and Military Government, since military discipline ensures that the army, at least on the lower levels, is comparatively free from corruption. Neither this feud (which is usually understood and enjoyed by the Germans) nor any mere purging and reorganisation, will go to the root of the matter, necessary though the latter certainly is.

The trouble springs from absence of policy, or at least of any policy which can be publicly admitted and defended. No amount of verbal democracy, nor of denazification even seriously carried out will make much difference as long as no attack is made on the *social* basis of German reaction; and no such attack will be made unless it is laid down clearly, and *forced* on the personnel, British as well as German, who must carry it out. Even then it can enlist the support of the Germans only if it is part of a general plan of social and economic reconstruction—industries must not only be nationalized, but also made to work; the old bosses must be turned out (especially in small enterprises, where they have tremendous influence over their workers) but the new ones must be trained and promoted; and the whole thing must be done at a pace, and with a ruthlessness, sufficient to convince the Germans that we know what we want and mean to have it. Perhaps, if this is done quickly, we shal

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be in time to recover the respect (and even support) which we received from the Germans only eighteen months ago.

But *does* the Government know what it wants in Germany, and is it prepared to resist American and German big business to get it? It is time to press for a clear answer.

New College, Oxford. BERNARD POOLE

MR. CHAMBERLAIN AND SPAIN

SIR,—Mr. Ronald Chamberlain protests in your columns that "Phineas" misrepresented him as being "wholly satisfied" with the Franco regime. I have before me a copy of *Arriba* (3/10/46) which I brought with me from Madrid, which reports an interview which Mr. Chamberlain gave to the Spanish Press just before his departure.

The headlines of this report say: *Your country is hardworking and worthy and I have spoken freely with everyone I wanted to.*

Mr. Chamberlain is quoted as saying: "Spain is a country very different from England, and it would be disloyal on my part to want to find the same system here as there is in my country. I would condemn any system in which a man was not permitted freely to express his opinions, and I would condemn any obstruction of religious freedom and of freedom of the press. If there were these obstructions in Spain I would not be happy, but I have not found one single proof that there are such obstructions. I repeat that I have only been here two weeks, but this is my opinion."

He was asked what impressions he had gained from his interview with the Caudillo: "Franco feels the need for greater understanding between both countries. He insisted that there is nothing to be hidden in Spain, and to emphasize this expressed the desire that English people should come and see what they wanted, as I have done."

In case Mr. Chamberlain claims to have been "misrepresented" by the Franco press, as by the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, I add the following: "Mr. Chamberlain, who is no relation to Mr. Chamberlain of Munich . . . added that he hoped that his words would be scrupulously reported because there are cases in these press interviews when statements are not reported quite correctly." One journalist appears to have asked whether the desire to have his words faithfully reported was due to faulty reporting of his words previously in Spain. He replies: "No, they were of a general character. The statements I have made to journalists during my journey have been reported and published without my being able to complain in the slightest."

NAN GREEN

CONSCRIPTION & RECONSTRUCTION

SIR,—I greet your leader—Bayonets Dig No Coal—and Mr. Zilliacus' letter on Labour's Foreign Policy as gleams of sanity in a crazy world. It should be obvious—even to Mr. Bevin in his anti-Communist fog—that there cannot be satisfactory civilian production without more demobilisation, not less; less conscription, not more.

My case may be an illuminating example of the frustration the average serving soldier feels. I was called up in October '44, age thirty-one, Group number fifty. In August last my Group, according to reasonable calculations, should have been up in December '46. Then came the first slow-up; I was a further three months back—April '47. Since the demob. announcement of yesterday, November 7th, I'm a further three months back.

A year ago I was accepted for training as a teacher under the Government Emergency Training Scheme. After my demob., I must wait a year or more to enter a Training College, take a course of over a year there. I will probably be thirty-six when I start teaching. Do you wonder that I'm sceptical of the Government's intentions of an early return to normality?.

HERBERT BROWN

ADVERTISERS AND THE PRESS

SIR,—In the Commons debate on the freedom of the Press, Mr. Haydn Davies, M.P., referred to the influence of advertising interests on the presentation and suppression of news, and other members spoke in particular of brewers' advertisements. The terms of reference of the Royal Commission ought to allow for an enquiry into the present relations between the brewing interest and the editorial side of the press. The previous Royal Commission on Licensing, appointed by the Labour Government in 1929, in its report of 1932 stated:

> As regards press advertisements, it has been contended that certain sections of the press are likely to shape their policy so as, at least, to give no offence to an industry which supplies them with so much advertisement revenue.

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As if to underline this statement, Sir Edgar Sanders, Director of the Brewers' Society, stated in 1933 that the commercial side of a newspaper was always pestering the editorial side, and that the commercial side of the press had asked him all sorts of questions about the effect of the reduction of the Beer Duty in 1931 on the advertising expenditure of the Trade; and he went on:

> If we begin advertising in the press we shall see that the continuance of our advertising is contingent upon the fact that we get editorial support as well in the same papers.

Though this statement was afterwards repudiated by the Newspaper Society, the Institute of Journalists, and the Chairman of the Brewers' Society, it does not appear to have been withdrawn by Sir E. Sanders, and that it should have been made at all illustrates the special dangers to the freedom of the press from this particular trade in intoxicants. It certainly indicates the need for public enquiry and possibly for subsequent legislative action. When the Government is ready to bring in the much overdue Licensing Reform Bill it will desire it to have a "good press," that is one free from the deflecting influences of trade and advertising pressures.

Secretary, DOUGLAS J. J. OWEN
Workers' Temperance League.

FARES AND PRIOR CHARGES

SIR,—Widespread dissatisfaction has been voiced at the findings in the Ministry of Transport Charges Consultative Committee's Report recommending further fare increases in the L.P.T.B.'s area. An increase in fares causes greater hardship in the London area than it does anywhere else in the country. Even before the war the burden of fares on the average family in the London Transport area was no less than £15 6*s*. a year, while in Birmingham, the second city of England, it was £8. To-day the discrepancy still remains, but the hardship is much greater because people are travelling longer distances owing to housing difficulties.

In the very nature of things, the findings of the Ministry of Transport's Committee were bound to be unsatisfactory to the travelling public. The Committee was charged with the task of recommending the means by which additional income could be obtained, and it had no alternative but to recommend increases in fares. Criticism should be directed, not

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to the findings of the Committee but rather to the validity of its terms of reference.

In particular, the provision of a profit of 5½ per cent. for holders of Debenture "C" stock as a first charge on the accounts is a public scandal which dates from the passing of the extraordinary London Passenger Transport Act by the National Government in 1933. This Act not only brought about one of the greatest mergers ever effected, but also guaranteed profits to the shareholders on large amounts of watered and fictitious capital. Thomas Tilling, Ltd., is one of the biggest holders of "C" Stock, and it is this firm which has led the demand for the full 5½ per cent. When it took over the buses the L.P.T.B. paid £4,731,126, mainly for the Lewis and Tilling undertakings. The assets, however, were only valued at £1,112,897, and the balance of £3,618,229 was in respect of goodwill. Unfortunately for the general public, interest is paid on the full amount.

When the Minister of Transport considers the Report of his Committee, he will bear in mind the fact that interest on L.P.T.B. "C" Stock has not exceeded 3½ per cent. during the period of the Wartime Railway Control Agreement, and it is to be hoped that he will seek a revision of the London Passenger Transport Act to secure a general scaling down of interest rates.

Hon. Sec. London Area Committee, F. B. Cope
Association of Scientific Workers.

MARSHALL'S BUILDINGS

Sir,—May I, as Chairman of the Southwark Borough Council's Public Health Committee, refer to a letter from Mr. C. Osborne, M.P., in your issue of November 2nd, 1946, in which he states that this Council had contractors in Marshall's Buildings within forty-eight hours of his speech in Parliament, implying that hitherto the condition of the buildings had been ignored by the Council.

The matter was, in fact, considered by the Council some months ago, when the Medical Officer of Health reported that it was essential that the drainage of the property should be entirely overhauled, as a preliminary to further improvement works. As a result, notice was served on the owner of the premises on February 20th, 1946, requiring him to carry out extensive repairs to the drainage system. At the same time he was requested to waive the period of four months within which he was required to execute the work, without prejudice to the question of legal liability, in order that the Council might themselves arrange for the work to be carried out at once. This request was ignored and the owner did not comply with the Council's notice. On July 20th, 1946, over three months before the matter was raised in Parliament, the Council's contractors entered the premises and commenced the repairs to the drainage system.

Southwark Town Hall. Jno. J. Keen

WHITE SAHIBS IN INDIA

Sir,—Mr. Woodrow Wyatt, in his review of my book, makes two serious criticisms, and I plead guilty to both. I under-estimated communal tension in India, before the recent riots of unprecedented scale, and I did not realise how the Moslem League had grown in strength since 1937; though I still think the League's importance is generally *over*-estimated.

But was it necessary to imply that I was wilfully dishonest? When the third edition of the *White Sahibs* went to press I had only the central elections to guide me; and the results I discounted (wrongly, as later events showed) because of the very narrow property franchise. The results of the N.W.F. Province were the first *provincial* results to be announced, and the only ones to reach me while correcting the proofs. They were immediately included in a footnote; and as they showed a dramatic defeat of Mr. Jinnah in the most predominantly Moslem of all the provinces, I saw no reason to modify my opinion. That opinion may have been based on a "myth"; but it was not a myth wilfully maintained by suppressing facts, as your reviewer (somewhat uncharitably) concludes.

I am sorry Mr. Wyatt "looked in vain" for "any reference" to the Congress Socialists. With more careful reading he would have found them discussed, with approval, in the eleventh chapter. Perhaps what he means is that the index is inadequate—another legitimate criticism, which I offer him gratuitously. There is no reason why the reviewer should have known that further references to the Congress Socialists, in previous editions, had to be cut out to make room for a survey of the last ten years; but even in what remains it is clear that my sympathies are with that party. And I so often criticised the official Congress policy that I simply do not understand why I am accused of regarding it as "snow white."

As to my alleged blackening of all British administrators, I praised so highly the attitude of several (including Munro, Elphinstone and Metcalfe) that I marvel, like Clive, at my own moderation. One of the best modern British administrators, as I also pointed out, was appointed Director of Agriculture by the first elected Council in Bombay—that is to say, by Indian nationalists—but his appointment was vetoed by the British Governor. He is a distinguished agricultural expert; and so far from seeing him as "all black" I am proud to count him among my personal friends.

Reginald Reynolds

20 Jubilee Place, S.W.3.

ASHDOWN FOREST

Sir.—We write to ask for the sympathy and support of you and your readers in the efforts that are being made by the Commoners, Local Authorities, and General Public in Sussex to prevent the permanent occupation as a Military Training Area of Ashdown Forest. It is unnecessary for us to emphasise the effect of such use by curtailing public access, constant disturbance, and the actual destruction of wild life.

We submit, too, that this is not by any means a purely local matter. Situated only some 35 miles from the heart of London and 10 from the satellite town at Crawley, Ashdown Forest assumes year by year an ever increasing importance as an open space. For it to be indefinitely requisitioned under modern war regulations, or worse, bought under Acts passed in the middle of last century, which allow of no public inquiry beforehand, is a matter that must cause concern to millions in London and the Home Counties. While recognising that such training areas are necessary in the interests of defence, we are convinced that there are alternative sites.

M.P. for East Grinstead. Ralph S. Clarke
T. C. McLaughley
Prospective Liberal Candidate East Grinstead.
Reg. T. Homeyard
Chairman East Grinstead Labour Party.

TECHNIQUE OF RADIO PLAYS

Sir,—My friend Mr. Edward Sackville West may or may not be right about the merits of my recent "junk-shop programme," *The Careerist*, but I think he is quite wrong in writing off its method as "antiquated." No one dislikes multiple-narration more than I do; the differentiated "inner voices" in this programme were something quite different and—so far as I am concerned—were an innovation (something of the sort had been done in the 'Thirties by Mr. Tyrone Guthrie, but there have been few parallels since). Where I was perhaps uneconomical in *The Careerist* was in using pre-recorded music as well as a speaking chorus, for the purpose of the latter was not to narrate but to take the place of an orchestra—another innovation that I had not tried before.

I cannot endorse Mr. Sackville West's comparison of *The Careerist* with my earlier programme, *He had a Date*. *The Careerist* is not only more efficient radio but, thanks to the Inner Voices, is much more articulate. Naturalism on the air, as everywhere else, tends to mean under-statement, whereas an Inner Voice can be legitimately lyrical. Of course lyrical language, fantasy and allegory do seem to some people both antiquated and undramatic. Hence the boredom of so much modern "drama."

Louis MacNeice

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

Ten years ago I heard someone begin a lecture by saying, " I have just re-read Mill on Liberty, and I believe nearly all of it." This was felt by most of the audience to be a piece of wilful paradox. Not many people now, when they really reflect upon it, believe without compromise in liberty as an absolute thing, as Mill and his fellows did. We want as much of it as we can comfortably get, and are habituating ourselves to expecting less and less of it. There is one field, however, in which we expect far more of it than the Victorians, and that is education. Mill's general rule is that no man can be rightly compelled to do anything because someone else thinks it will be better for him; but he makes a particular exception for children and young persons. In the *Autobicgraphy* he sums up the matter more clearly still.

> Much must be done, and much must be learnt, by children, for which rigid discipline and known liability to punishment are indispensable as means. It is no doubt, a very laudable effort, in modern teaching, to render as much as possible of what the young are required to learn, easy and interesting to them. But when this principle is pushed to the length of not requiring them to learn anything *but* what has been made easy and interesting, one of the chief objects of education is sacrificed.

The operative words are " rigid discipline " and " known liability to punishment." Such, maybe, are the methods by which great individualists are made. James and John Stuart Mill would think that we are giving our children only the liberty to become slaves. If I were to meet that formidable pair in whatever Elysian fields are haunted by the shades of Utilitarians, I should not care to expound to them the Dalton plan, or the principles of Mr. A. S. Neill.

When we read in his *Autobiography* of the ferocious education of the younger Mill it is hard to know whether to marvel more at the endurance of the father or at that of the son. James Mill was writing his *History of India* when he began to teach Greek to John Stuart, at the age of three. He and his prodigious infant sat at the same table: James Mill was the most impatient of men: there were no Greek-English dictionaries in those days, and the child had to apply to his father for the meaning of every unknown word.

> I learnt no Latin until my eighth year. At that time I had read, under my father's tuition, a number of Greek prose authors, among whom I remember the whole of Herodotus, and of Xenophon's Cyropædia and Memorials of Socrates; some of the lives of the philosophers by Diogenes Laertius; part of Lucian, and Isocrates ad Demonicum and Ad Nicoclem. I also read, in 1813, the first six dialogues (in the common arrangement) of Plato, from the Euthyphron to the Theoctetus inclusive: which last dialogue, I venture to think, would have been better omitted, as it was totally impossible I should understand it.

Yet the history of India was written. The boy's lighter reading during these years had been mainly historical, Robertson, Hume and Gibbon. James Mill made this the opportunity for giving him " explanations and ideas respecting civilisation, government, morality and mental cultivation," which the boy afterwards had to repeat in his own words. Latin, Greek poetry and more history were added at the age of eight, logic at twelve.

> During the same years I learnt elementary geometry and algebra thoroughly, the differential calculus, and other portions of the higher mathematics far from thoroughly: for my father, not having kept up this part of his early acquired knowledge, could not spare time to qualify himself for removing my difficulties, and left me to deal with them, with little other aid than that of books: while I was continually incurring his displeasure by my inability to solve difficult problems for which he did not see that I had not the necessary previous knowledge.

At thirteen he was given a course of political economy, and was required to make a criticism of Adam Smith in the light of Ricardo. There was no cramming: he was never told anything till he had tried all the possible methods of finding it out for himself: and he was expected to be rigidly precise in his utterance. About this time he incurred the grave displeasure of his father for using the word " idea " without being able to define it: and aroused a lively indignation by succumbing to the vulgar fallacy that a thing could be true in theory but not in practice. By the end of his formal education he was, by his own estimate, about twenty-five years ahead of most youths of his age: but he was quite convinced that this was not due to any superior powers. In memory and mental energy he says, he was rather below the average, and what he did could certainly be done by any boy or girl of average capacity and healthy constitution.

It may be, as we are sometimes told, that the life force is developing in humanity powers of concentration and apprehension of which we now have no idea, but most of the evidence seems to point the other way. The prodigious amount of work accomplished by some Victorians makes us wonder, not only at their inexhaustible springs of mental energy, but how they actually fitted it all in to a twenty-four hour day. James Mill, holding opinions in politics and religion that were anathema to all respectable Englishmen, for many years supported a large family entirely by writing for periodicals; educated his children at the highest possible level, entirely by himself; and still found time to write the *History of India.* Mr. Gladstone, who was, after all, professionally employed in governing England, produced a mass of work on Homer, on church government, on an immense range of literary topics, which would be impressive if he had never left his library at Hawarden. There are seven volumes of his collected articles from periodicals alone, and the entries under his name in the British Museum catalogue run to thirty pages.

It may, too, be of archæological interest to recall that at that time men of education were supposed to be actuated by attachment to the truth, and in fact sometimes were so. James Mill's *History of India* is violently hostile to the Government and to the commercial privileges of the East India Company. No man could have hoped for advancement from such a book. Yet the East India Company directors appointed him to a responsible post in their home office, simply, it appears, for his intellectual ability and knowledge of Indian affairs. Many years later John Stuart Mill was invited to stand for Parliament. He believed that a candidate ought neither to canvass nor spend money on his election. He accordingly announced that he would not do either; and added that if he were elected he would devote neither time nor labour to the local interests of his constituency. At one of the few meetings which he did attend he was charged with having made a statement that the English working classes were generally liars. He at once admitted it. And he was elected by a comfortable majority.

Such honesty looks almost dangerous; and John Stuart Mill's upbringing was, of course, in more ways than one, a dangerous experiment. No one could survive that terrific intellectual and moral compulsion, the exclusion of all other interests, without damage. James Mill had the greatest contempt for all the passionate emotions; he regarded as a regrettable aberration of modern morals the great stress laid upon feeling. So his son was conscientiously brought up as far as possible without any. It is hardly surprising that at the age of twenty he had a nervous breakdown. What is more surprising is that he understood so clearly what was going on. Of all the modern psychologists Jung has analysed most clearly this process of psychic exhaustion and rebirth: but he could hardly improve on Mill's account of his own case. Just when his active life should have been opening before him, Mill found that the exclusive cultivation of a single faculty had led to a dead end.

> I was in a dull state of nerves, such as everybody is occasionally liable to; unsusceptible of enjoyment or pleasurable excitement; one of those moods when what is pleasant at other times becomes insipid or indifferent . . . In this frame of mind it occurred to me to put the question directly to myself: " Suppose that all your objects in life were realised; that all the changes in institutions and opinions which you are looking forward to, could be completely effected at this very instant; would this be a great joy and happiness to you ? " And an irrepressible self-consciousness distinctly answered " No ! " At this my heart sank within me: the whole foundation on which my life was constructed fell down.

The faculty of thought was exhausted, and he knew how to use no other. His education had done nothing to cultivate feeling, and he believed that he had none. He passed the winter of 1826 in a dull torpor. After six months of this kind of life a small light broke upon the gloom. He was moved to tears by a passage in Marmontel's *Memoirs.* " From this moment my burden grew lighter. The oppression of the thought that all feeling was dead within me, was gone. I was no longer hopeless: I was not a stock or a stone." The revival of the submerged faculty of feeling was developed by reading Wordsworth: and in this mild light the etiolated emotional system gently began to unfold.

There is not much wrong with Mill's emotional life after this, unless one subscribes to the convention that the only feelings which are vigorous are those which are ill-regulated. But, alas! his *éducation sentimentale* began too late to penetrate his writing, which remains, especially just when it should not be, hideously dry and insensitive. After a friendship of twenty years he married Mrs. Taylor, on the death of her first husband; and for seven years they enjoyed a partnership shorter, but of the same kind as that of Beatrice and Sidney Webb. It was a friendship of equals, and Mill attributes to her the shaping influence on all his later work, and almost all the happiness of his mature life. But he is maddeningly unable to express the feeling that is obviously there.

> The same exactness and rapidity of operation, pervading as it did her sensitive as well as her mental faculties, would with her gifts of feeling and imagination, have fitted her to be a consummate artist, as her fiery and tender soul and her vigorous eloquence would certainly have made her a great orator; and her profound knowledge of human nature and discernment and sagacity in practical life, would, in the times when such a *carrière* was open to women, have made her eminent among the rulers of mankind.

The writing is like galvanized iron: which makes the gleams of emotion all the more striking on the rare occasions when they come through. Mrs. Mill died just after the completion of the essay on *Liberty*, in which she had collaborated.

> After my irreparable loss, one of my earliest cares was to print and publish the treatise, so much of which was the work of her whom I had lost, and consecrate it to her memory. I have made no alteration or addition to it, nor shall I ever. Though it wants the last touch of her hand, no substitute for that touch shall ever be attempted by mine

This is a long way from the young man who found his feelings atrophied at the age of twenty.

An element of priggishness would perhaps be impossible to avoid with such an education. Virtue is a little aggressively triumphant in the story of his election. Unfortunately, in this case, she only triumphed once; Mill lost the second election; and virtue in defeat becomes almost strident. Mill indeed took a very lofty view of the position and duty of the intellectual. " A person of high intellect should never go into general society except as an apostle," he said; and urbanity has never been the besetting virtue of apostles. Mill's plan of life, however, is never likely to become dangerously common: indeed, we are hardly likely to see it repeated. Considering the possible range of human capacities it is limited and colourless; but compared with a nine-to-five job at a ministry, with a little inconclusive emotional untidiness at week-ends, it has a kind of muted grandeur.

Graham Hough

JOURNEY THROUGH AVERNUS

European Witness. By Stephen Spender. *Hamish Hamilton.* 10s. 6d.

Perhaps Mr. Spender is not to be blamed for not writing a weightier book. His new volume does not deal with the German problem, nor really with German intellectual life which he went to Germany to assess. It records conversations with students, upper and middle class families, prisoner and K.Z. victims, professors and British officers: it is reporting—the reporting mercifully of an intellectual—done with quiet humour and in good writing that makes it an attractive book to read. He is not to be blamed, because the summer and autumn of 1945, which is the period covered in the book, was an interim, the lull of chaos between the end of the war and the present conflict in Europe. The Allies were still united, the Germans still dazed; over two million human beings were on the move over the face of the land; communications and essential services were shattered and there was no problem but that of replacing chaos with order. Meanwhile military government headquarters worked like lions and multiplied like rabbits; the first civilian officials began to appear from England and the vast bureaucracy began to establish itself. It was a time of unparalleled swans, fabulous rackets and almost limitless booze. The problem of restoring order was so vast that the intrinsic problem of Germany could scarcely obtrude itself.

It was therefore natural for the author to record rather than construct a synthesis. Indeed the charm of the book for those who spent some time in Germany lies in the fact that one shares so many of his experiences. His encounter with two self-satisfied young A.T.S. officers, politically illiterate but drilled in the tenets of their class, recalls to me evenings of torture at Hamburg. How often, discussing de-Nazification, was one not asked by good-hearted and hard-working officers the question: "Do you mean to say that we should take sides in this country?" One remembers the look of the faces of German prisoners and D.P.'s "in patched blue uniform with their pinched faces which had the detached floating melancholy air of harlequins." The green midges which beset him in Bonn in August I had observed concentrating for the attack in April. These and other experiences which he describes put one on good terms with the author. One could, however, do with less about the mechanical defects of his car. I can assure Mr. Spender that he was not singled out by fate in his misfortunes; at that time everyone's car broke down. Indeed one senior British official had only to take to the air for an engine to fall out of the aircraft or to the autobahn for his car to disintegrate leaving him and his brief case at the mercy of Allied soldiery: he solved the problem by engaging a Commando officer as a sort of stud-groom who bred transport in such quantities that he could always be assured of a second and third mount. The account of the author's travels also contains an interesting analysis of Goebel's novel *Michael* and an interlude spent in France, which skilfully makes the reader look at Germany from a different angle through European eyes. There are one or two minor slips; but surely on p. 186 Liliencron is the name of the German poet and should not be translated "The Crown of Lilies"?

Nevertheless, the excellence of Mr. Spender's analyses of our intellectual and spiritual plight makes one wish that he had devoted himself more to serious contemplation. There is a stimulating passage, too long to quote, at the beginning of his chapter on France, on the relation of one's own consciousness to that of society as a whole, which is echoed at the close of the book, where the author says of the Nazis:

> What they destroyed, once and for all, is the modern middle-class idea that man, as a social being, does not have to choose between good and evil. They involved almost the whole of the German middle classes—and a great section of the middle classes of Europe and the rest of the world—in physical and moral damnation by forcing them to be really wicked and to be involved in wholly sinful actions. The world is now aghast with the realisation that society has got to choose not just to be free but to be good.

Then he goes on to examine how these Satanic monsters affected him—and for that matter many other left-wing intellectuals.

> Thus can I explain to myself why it is these terrible men preoccupied . . . not only my waking thoughts but also my dreams, during many years. And in my dreams I did not simply hate them and put them from me. I argued with them, I wrestled with their spirits, and the scene in which I knew them was one in which my own blood and tears flowed. The cities and soil of Germany where they sacrificed were not just places of material destruction. They were altars on which a solemn sacrifice had been performed according to a ritual in which inevitably all the nations took part. The whole world had seemed to be darkened with their darkness, and when they left the world, the threat of a still greater darkness, a total and everlasting one, rose up from their ashes.

It is the relation of the intellectual and artist to this second darkness which Mr. Spender, one of our few international intellectuals, should interpret to us. Existentialism is not just the latest fad in modern thought. It is the expression of an utterly changed European culture from which we, having escaped occupation, are utterly estranged. Are those artists who spent their creative youth in the conflict against Fascism now to find themselves robbed of their last hopes? Have the torments which Europe has endured engendered contempt for the scale of values which we hold dear? It is too easy to dismiss the talk of the student Aulach in this book as the rigmarole of an intellect which has been poisoned and starved; for Aulach is nearer to the prevailing temperament in Europe than the elderly liberal professors trying to pick up a few fragments of the vase that was finally shattered in 1933. Cosmologies are built out of our experience not by abstract reason; in what way can we have said to have partaken in intellectual and moral experience of Europe during the war? These are the problems to which I hope Mr. Spender will return, since he has the gifts to illuminate the darkness.

Noel Annan

A GUEST AT SELBORNE

The Portrait of a Tortoise. Extracted from the Journals and Letters of Gilbert White. With an Introduction and Notes by Sylvia Townsend Warner. *Chatto and Windus.* 4s.

This pretty book is not quite fair to the reviewer, who would like to be sure that his praise is justly assigned. It is conceivable that a writer of imagination, diligence and *esprit*, yet without Miss Townsend Warner's particular gifts, might have compiled from Gilbert White's Journals and Letters this little history of Timothy—but who among us now could be Boswell to a tortoise? Who has to-day the leisured span of life, the serene yet curious temperament, the talent for never moving from one place? Miss Townsend Warner's task could easily have been completed in thirty days; Gilbert White's record covers nearly thirty years, and comes to a close only with his death in 1793. Unmarried, though the affectionate uncle of numerous nieces and nephews, without worldly ambitions, secure in the equilibrium of the eighteenth century, Gilbert White chose to pass almost all of his seventy-three years in his native Selborne, alertly observing the pleasant details of the changing seasons. Who more suitable to record, year after year, the small vicissitudes that the annual cycle brought to his long-lived visitor?

Gilbert White's original interest in Timothy was not a personal one. He was continually preoccupied with the question: how did the swallows or "Hirundines," spend the winter? Was the answer migration or hibernation? This was a mystery that all his observation and experiment failed to solve. Rejecting one current theory that they settled *under water* during the cold months, he inclined on the whole to the fashionable scientific view that they wintered in holes in the ground or in hollow trees. (The former theory was held by Dr. Johnson, who declared that "a number of them conglobulate together by flying round and round, and then in a heap throw themselves under water and lie in the bed of a river.") But the rational mind required the support of analogy, and so Gilbert White considered the habits of the Fern-Owls, the Bank Martins, the snails, carp, bats and flies, and above all those of the tortoise belonging to his aunt, Mrs. Rebecca Snooke, of Ringmer in Sussex.

Nearly forty years before he moved to Selborne, Timothy had been bought by Mr. Snooke for half a crown from a sailor in Chichester; he lived in a walled court in Mrs. Snooke's garden until the old lady's death at the age of eighty-six. (Timothy was then approaching fifty.) For the great change that followed we turn to the Journal entry of March 17th, 1780:

> Brought away Mrs. Snooke's old tortoise, Timothy, which she valued much, and had treated kindly for near 40 years. When dug out of it's hybernaculum, it resented the Insult by hissing.
>
> March 20. We took the tortoise out of it's box, & buried it in the garden: but the weather being warm it heaved up the mould, and walked twice down to the bottom of the long walk to survey the premises.

In a short time Timothy had settled down in his new home, with its light soil—a change after the damp clay of Ringmer—its succulent vegetables, its obliging gardener Thomas Hoar. Here he pursued his placid yearly pattern of retiring into the mould between November and April, "eating voraciously" during the summer months of his favourite cucumbers, kidney beans and lettuce ("he picks out the hearts and stems of Coss-lettuce, holding the outer leaves back with his feet"), and even frisking in June, when "his pursuits, which seem to be of the amorous kind, transport him beyond the bounds of his usual gravity." As the year drew to a close he might be found sleeping "under a Marvel of Peru," or "under the shade of the vast expanded leaves of the monk's rhubarb."

In spite of the friendly attention paid to him, Timothy's attitude to his patron is marked by an Augustan reserve. No doubt he was, like his master, a true child of his century, and did not care for Enthusiasm. We do not forget his flattering awareness of Mrs. Snooke, which her nephew duly recorded:

> As soon as the good old lady comes in sight who has waited on it for more than thirty years, it hobbles towards it's benefactress with aukward alacrity; but remains inattentive to strangers.

But would it be ungracious to recall that hers was the hand that brought the lettuces to the monotonous little walled court? Perhaps, also, Timothy did not care to be thought a "specimen"; he resented the affronts made by Gilbert White to his dignity—an experiment with an ear trumpet which showed that he did not hear, or choose to hear; a humiliating business with a tub of water which revealed that he could not swim.

Miss Townsend Warner cannot help giving a glimpse or two of the Selborne world outside Timothy's garden: an account of the peripatetic Dr. Chandler and his Lady; the astonishment of the "Bantham fowls" at seeing snow for the first time; or the naturalist's musings on fertility:

> May 16 (1790) One polyanth-stalk produced 47 pips or blossoms. Mrs. Edmund White brought to bed of a boy, who has encreased the number of my nephews and nieces to 56.

We are more favoured than Timothy in that we are free to go through these tempting gaps in the hedges and visit the "vast spaces" outside the scope of this little book. He, attempting to escape from his garden boundary, "met with nothing but weeds, and coarse grass, and solitude," and "was glad to return to the poppies, and lettuces, and the other luxuries." No such disappointment awaits the reader of this selection who is fortunate enough to be new to Gilbert White, and is prepared to study Timothy in his proper context in the Letters and Journals.

NAOMI LEWIS

THE MORRISON PILL

National Enterprise. By ERNEST DAVIES. *Gollancz.* 6s.

As heirs to the Fabian legacy, the leaders of the Labour Party have long insisted that mastery of administrative technique is the key to successful social reform. From their apprenticeship, spent in municipal and trade union politics, they have acquired a distaste for theory and a pronounced belief in the value of empiricism. They find that the immediate problems of majority rule at Westminster are but larger versions of those with which they have dealt for years. They are familiar with the habits of permanent officials, with the committee-system, and with the methods of industrial negotiation. The State, to them, like a county council, is a machine which works to established rules.

Up to a point, there is some virtue in this. Too many Socialist parties spend their years in the wilderness indicting the evils of capitalism and drafting projects for the new society, leaving open the question of what they will do on the day after they come to power. The Labour Party, on the contrary, has spent a good many years—including two unhappy periods of office—discussing little else but its short-term programme. Where it was intended to lead was—and largely still is—anybody's guess. The real test of the merits of the Social-Democratic experiment which started in Britain in 1945 is not, as many people believe, its success in temporarily patching up our economic difficulties but its ability to go on from that to the more radical task of establishing a socialist community.

The decisive question clearly is the future pattern of industry, commerce and the public services. There are certain industries which have been ripe for nationalisation for more than twenty years. Since the Labour victory it is no longer enough for a Socialist to state the case for nationalisation in principle. Political controversies are now cloaked in technical problems. We now have to debate the structure and control of nationalised industries, their relation to the rest of the economy, and their role as advance instalments of the Socialist Commonwealth which, we are assured, will gradually replace capitalist society. Mr. Davies, in his excellent book, has made an important contribution to this critical discussion.

This study, which supplements his earlier *National Capitalism*, again displays Mr. Davies' capacity for clear analysis. The public corporation, he says, is the chosen instrument for operating the industries and services that Labour is nationalising. While it is quite capable of efficient and economical production, it does not necessarily lead either to the democratisation of industry or to a public sense of Socialist ownership. Yet, if its directing board is properly selected, it is the most suitable form of nationalisation under present conditions. It is, in any case, superior to direct administration by a Government Department, along the lines of the Post Office, a solution that Labour has rightly rejected.

A large part of this book deals with the record of public corporations established before the war, such as the B.B.C. and the London Passenger Transport Board. Though Mr. Davies accepts them as based on the right principle, he is by no means blind to their weaknesses, especially the unsuitable financial basis upon which they were founded. He argues, however, that Labour has drawn valuable lessons in public ownership from their experience. In fact, a large part of the party's strategy is based on Herbert Morrison's close study of their varying success and failure.

This method of nationalisation, although it is extremely flexible, is not as simple as it looks. As Mr. Davies rightly points out, each industry has to be given different treatment. What is right for one may lead to chaos in another. Moreover, coal-mining and transport, to take two current examples, are of greater importance to the rest of the economic system than any of the services which have yet come under public control. It is essential, Mr. Davies argues, that in such cases there should be greater Ministerial supervision than there has ever been of broadcasting or of the L.P.T.B., though this still does not mean that the Minister need interfere in day-to-day administration. Mr. Davies, in an admirable discussion of this problem, has gone to some trouble to work out a means of giving the management of the new type of corporation sufficient executive independence to ensure initiative and, at the same time, securing greater responsibility to the Cabinet and to Parliament. Though the whole book is of great importance, this section should be read by M.P.s with special care.

Since Mr. Davies strongly endorses the general nationalisation policy pursued by the Labour team of which he is a back-bench supporter, his criticisms carry some weight. A good many of his colleagues will be willing to back his plea that directing boards should not be staffed by men who have spent their lives trying to build industrial monopolies, to protect the interests of stockholders and to limit the activities of trade unions. He argues, as some M.P.s have already done in the House of Commons, for greater representation of consumers on advisory councils. Though we have come a long way from the Syndicalists and Guild-Socialists, Mr. Davies rightly says that it would be fatal to forget the importance of giving the workers a share in management and control. Expert administration, though vital, is not everything. Nationalised industry must be decentralised as far as efficiency permits if the workers, technical staff and the public are to capture a feeling of ownership. Apathy and bureaucracy can arise if the power of decision is vested only in a central Board as easily as they might if industry were run as a branch of the Civil Service.

There are passages in this book where I feel that, in his anxiety to give credit where it is due, Mr. Davies has given the Government's policy more coherence than it actually possesses. Be that as it may, this is an extremely able exposition of the principles and experience upon which that policy is based. Perhaps wisely, Mr. Davies has made little attempt to set it against a wider background. Conciliation of private enterprise may be a necessary condition of doing anything effective at the moment. But a large section of the Labour movement would be much happier if it felt that its leaders had any view of where they intend to go once this wave of reform has patched up the worst damage left by private enterprise. "I am sorry," said Thomas Carlyle many years ago, "I have got no Morrison's Pill for curing the maladies of Society." We have: but it is possible that we shall have to consider other remedies.

NORMAN MACKENZIE

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John Hilton. By EDNA NIXON. *Allen & Unwin.* 15s.

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artist; and this usually means oblivion after death, or at best a dim legend.

He was not known to the general public until the last ten years of his life. During that time he sprang into popularity as a radio speaker. By this means he became a fireside friend to six million listeners, most of them of the working class into which he was born. By being *of* them, he knew the way their minds worked; he knew their fears, superstitions, their great kindnesses, and their excessive need for intimacy. That is why, by means of the radio, he was able to go into their homes and to sit down with them, lay a hand on their arm or shoulder, call them brother, sister, son—and get away with it. Let a man from another walk of life try that method! It would be taken as an insult. But Hilton was able to give advice about the things that are the perpetual worry of the hand-to-mouth folk; insurance, work, the troubles between employer and employed, the spectre of sickness, disturbances in the home, and all the rest of it. He even dared to talk to them about things outside this natural range of their lives; books, education, art, beauty. And he got away with that, too. It was an achievement that appeared simple enough. His biographer now shows what infinite pains he took to succeed.

To begin with, the background of this work was fifty-three years (that was the age at which he first broadcast) of slavery. He began work at fourteen as a boy in a bicycle shop in his native town of Bolton. With night school, this meant a sixteen-hour day. He was determined not to repeat his father's grim career, which began at the age of eight in a cotton mill, with a twelve-hour day.

By the time Hilton was twenty-three, he was manager of an engineering works. But his nature was too much that of a contemplative for him to be content with a mechanical life. He had a rich stock of vanity (a useful spur to a man with talent), and he had to find a means of self-expression. He had also the temperament of an actor, but it was so riddled with self-examination that it became transparent, and therefore un-self-consciousness gradually resulted from the extreme self-consciousness that must have marked his earlier years.

I knew him first at the later stage, when he was an Assistant Secretary in the Ministry of Labour. He had reached there through the channel of his sociological work, notably by the Report which he made, at the request of the Government in 1918, on Trade Organisations and Combinations, while he was Secretary of the Garfield Foundation. Through his work in Whitehall he made himself a master of Statistical Method, and finally he was offered the Chair of Industrial Relations at Cambridge. Neither in Whitehall nor at Cambridge was he happy. He was too aggressive, too much the actor, and far too emotional, to be able to accommodate himself to the tempo of the official and the academic worlds.

I found him a delightfully unusual Civil Servant. One day, for example, he invited me to his room to listen to his savage attack on the reputation of Wordsworth as a poet. He thought Wordsworth was all bolony, and said so in that fashion. I thought he was either mad or posing; and said so. But that didn't upset him. It stirred him up, however. I could see the intense struggle of thought and emotion going on behind those shy, gypsy-like eyes. In appearance he was a cross between a gypsy who has just stolen a chicken, and the popular pictures of Sherlock Holmes. He had a faculty for ingratiating himself into one's affections, largely because of the defencelessness which resulted from his instant emotional reaction to every event of daily life. It is good to have such men in the modern world, where everything is docketed, and character is usually smeared down with politics, like an errand boy's hair with grease. Hilton's hair was always ruffled.

During the war, Hilton gave himself up completely to the men and women of the Forces, and to the folk who were fighting at home, slogging in factory and field. He visited the Front in North Africa, in order to find out at first-hand what sort of things the troops wanted him to talk to them about on the radio. His technique was studied down to the last inflexion of voice. Talks were written and re-written, the utmost labour going into the effort to make them sound spontaneous and casual. Certainly, he succeeded. He knew his subjects. He knew his audience. And he had the natural gift of a musical voice which he had been training for many years by public speaking and amateur acting.

Mrs. Nixon's biography is based on many years of close friendship and co-operation with him. It is a well-planned book, and a large mass of material has been given an organic shape, so that the result is a work of art. The man lives in it, and we can even see a wart or two. She says some wise things too. "To travel well is an art in itself." In this book she has travelled through the life of a remarkable man; and she has travelled well.

RICHARD CHURCH

A MAN OF FEELING

Four Studies in Loyalty. By CHRISTOPHER SYKES. *Collins.* 12s. 6d.

Writers now seem usually so certain that their message is important, so impatient therefore to deliver it, that they despise the art of presentation. Since they instruct and edify, why should they trouble to please? Niceties of language are frivolous. Besides, they entail a great expense of time and thought. A writer who searches for the exact epitaph in the age of the atom bomb is like a fop who, on the Day of Judgment, concerns himself with the harmony between his tie and his socks. One understands this feeling, but there is a flaw in the argument. Readers, unlike writers, are unregenerate: they want pleasure rather than edification; or, rather they can accept edification only if pleasure is offered with it. The obsolescent virtue of urbanity is what first strikes one in Mr. Sykes' book. He is at pains to please: and thus he forces one to go on reading. The ease and irony of his language reflect the clarity and liveliness of his mind. Then one comes to see that he writes also with deep feeling. Each of these four studies comes from the heart.

The first is a portrait of the author's uncle, another Christopher Sykes. He was born in 1831, the son of a sporting baronet, no less savage and despotic than the father of Frederick the Great. He grew into a melancholic dandy and in his thirties became the victim of a life-long passion for the Prince of Wales. He spent all his fortune as well as all his energy in entertaining the Prince, and in return was treated as a buffoon. One evening the Prince emptied a glass of brandy on his friend's head. His calm acceptance was found so uproariously funny that further refinements were devised by the Guelph imagination.

> In place of the glass a full bottle was substituted, and another royal discovery was that even funnier effects could be conjured by pouring the precious liquid not on to his hair, but down his friend's neck. Amid screams of sycophantic laughter the Prince invented an entirely new diversion. Christopher was hurled underneath the billiard-table while the Prince and his faithful courtiers prevented his escape by spearing at him with billiard-cues. And there were further elaborations of the sousing theme. Watering cans were introduced into Christopher's bedroom and his couch sprinkled by the royal hand. New parlour games were evolved from the Prince's simple but inventive mind: while smoking a cigar he would invite Christopher to gaze into his eyes in order to see the smoke coming out of them, and while Christopher was thus obediently engaged, the Prince would

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thrust the burning end on to his friend's unguarded hand. And the basis of the joke never weakened. To pour brandy down the neck of some roaring drunken sot of a courtier was one thing: but Christopher remained the statuesque figure he had been on the great night of the brandy glass. He never failed his audience. Never. His hat would be knocked off, the cigar would be applied, the soda-water pumped over his head, and he would incline, and murmur: "As Your Royal Highness pleases."

The picture is curious, alike to the student of the Victorian age and to the psychologist. Snobbery seems hardly a sufficient explanation of the victim's patience. Did he find in the Prince a substitute for the father who had similarly persecuted him? The story is told not only with horrified amusement but with sympathy.

The second study is, in my opinion, the best of the four, a masterpiece of miniature portrait-painting which, if unsigned, might fairly be catalogued as *scuola di Nicolson*. The sitter is a Persian, a delightful, clever, affectionate, pathetic old reprobate, so romantically and altruistically devoted to England that, rather than work against us, he sacrificed all the pleasures that he enjoyed to excess. But the story is too good for me to spoil by a summary. Mr. Sykes incidentally includes some illuminating and deserved strictures upon Reza Shah and the admiration of British officials for that disgusting despot.

The third study (and the longest) is devoted to Mr. Sykes's close friend and collaborator, Robert Byron who was killed in the war. He was one of the most remarkable men I have known and also the most ungovernable. For this reason it is still too soon to make a complete picture of him. But Mr. Sykes brings out well the superb intensity with which he lived, his truculence, and his passion for certain principles (after Munich none of his friends would have been much surprised if he had gone up to Mr. Chamberlain and impaled him upon his beastly umbrella). The trenchancy of Byron's thought and prose might have made him an exemplary pamphleteer. His book on India, for instance—because it is on the whole so well balanced—is the most effective indictment of English racial prejudice. His feeling for architecture was outstanding, and if he had lived might have resulted in a great work. Unluckily he chose to write as often as not about painting. And, because he cared only for what painting has in common with architecture, he often talked nonsense. Although the Byzantine origin of El Greco's art is, as Mr. Sykes points out, now accepted, I am not alone in doubting whether any sign of this remains in the later work, which is what Robert Byron so much admired. And his total lack of appreciation, on the other hand, for Shakespeare, Rembrandt, and indeed almost all Western European painting, left one bewildered. How could a man be at once so rich in sensibility and so blinded by prejudice? The intensity with which Robert Byron felt and thought and looked and travelled made his death at thirty-six particularly painful to all his friends. But, as Mr. Sykes says: "He had already achieved the greatest of all ambitions: a life which was tremendously worth living."

The fourth study of loyalty is an account of the French population in the Vosges among which Mr. Sykes dropped in August, 1944, with a small force of parachutists. No more generous or more sincere tribute has been paid to the courage of the resistant French. There are characteristic neat comments: "Our British insularity is most insular in this: we cannot believe a boastful man to be brave." Sometimes, on the other hand, Mr. Sykes is content to state the facts. In one place the male population, 210 individuals, went to a concentration camp rather than say—what they all knew—where the British parachutists were hidden: "I have not the command of language to express the admiration I feel." Mr. Sykes has been back twice since the liberation, and he found men who had fought together, whose lives had been in one another's hands, now denouncing one another. He found this bitter but he is content to remark: "Both our countries have one error of reasoning in common: a belief that freedom is most honoured by organised mutual loathing."

RAYMOND MORTIMER

RESEARCH IMPERIAL

Native Economies of Nigeria, being the first volume of a study of the "Economics of a Tropical Dependency." By PROF. DARYLL FORDE and DR. RICHENDA SCOTT. Edited by Margery Perham, under the auspices of Nuffield College. *Faber and Faber.* 25s.

The first published result of the colonial research drive offers little essentially new. The Nigerian picture is of a vast population where the annual spending power of whole families is to be reckoned almost in shillings but where their subsistence is reasonably assured; where the pleasures of the daily round, hunting or fishing, drumming and dancing, more or less balance the also accustomed chances of calamity or disease; where, accordingly, there is mountainous inertia to be overcome to get necessary and often obvious means of betterment generally adopted. Happily, the blessed phrases about the disastrous effects of contact with civilisation are not repeated here. It is evident that road-making and railways are a material help even now wherever they exist. It appears, too, that tribal divisions and jealousies are responsible for the local congestion of population among the Ibo, preventing relief by migration to relatively thinly populated country it may be only ten or twenty miles distant. It gives food for thought that our punctilious regard for such tribal prejudices is having much the same constrictive effect on the fluidity of population in free Nigeria as the habit of penning Africans in "Reserves" in South Africa and elsewhere.

It is important to get down to quantitative analysis of inequalities of income and of the closely related "land palaver" that rages among all the more progressive tribes owing to the opportunities of wealth from inflated land values arising from the spread of economic crops. The book stresses the danger of the rise of *latifundia,* without perhaps clearly emphasising that the Africans' own interests may sometimes demand the adoption of larger scale mechanised farming. The point is made that where Islamic law runs there is some check on the abuses of usury and debt, but also on the borrowing of capital for any new enterprise. It should be added that the absence of any such code of public morality is largely responsible for the explosive forces in many animistic districts.

The way of advance must be to relieve the present struggle for bare subsistence and to release man-power, for example, for light native industries. But even more is needed than "intelligent direction, vision and courage, on the part of the British authorities." The late H. V. Meyerowitz wore himself out in a struggle to lay the foundations of such industries. His last words to me, in London a few days before his tragic end, insisted that Africans need to learn the pride and joy of work well done for its own sake. He would, he exclaimed, sum up his message to Africans "in one word, *work*!"

This subject is, after all, not only "colonial research," but what an African Carlyle might call the "Condition of Africa Question." I recall my earliest ventures in research in South Africa at a time when all public questions were liable there to take a "racial" political colour. Quite impartial presentation of incontrovertible facts succeeded in making some impression, even in making politics more realist. It would not be

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